

THE BIOGRAPHICAL TRADITION IN SUFISM

The *ṭabaqāt* genre from al-Sulamī to Jāmī

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This book is concerned with that intersection between the disciplines of literature and history which has become increasingly influential in Islamic Studies in recent times. Whilst being grounded in the detailed analysis of Arabic and Persian Sufi texts, it draws out conclusions with implications reaching into the wider use of the *tabaqat* genre in the Islamic literary tradition, the reconstruction of the history of Sufism and the general principle of representing the past of one's own tradition in the form of juxtaposed biographies of selected authorities, to meet the needs of the present.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used:

EI ¹	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> (First edition)
EI ²	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> (Second edition)
H	Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Ḥilyat al-awliyā'</i>
KM	'Alī Hujwīrī, <i>Kashf al-mahjūb</i> (Ed. V. Zhukovski)
L	Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, <i>Kitāb al-luma'</i> (Ed. R.A. Nicholson)
N	'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, <i>Nafahāt al-uns</i> (Ed. M. Abedi)
Q	The Qur'an (Cairo edition)
R	Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, <i>al-Risāla</i> (Eds A.H. Mahmud & M. al-Sharif) (Tehran reprint)
TABA	'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī, <i>Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya</i> (Ed. A.H. Habibi)
TABS	Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, <i>Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya</i> (Ed. J. Pedersen)

(Further details about these works are included in the bibliography.)

Note on presentation

All Arabic and Persian terms have been transliterated, unless they are included in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Ninth Edition), such as Qur'an, hadith, shariah and fatwa. My transliteration follows the system of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, with the modifications customary in works in English. Formulaic prayers are omitted.

The full titles of the works referred to in the notes of the text, together with their publication details, are provided in the bibliography.

Introduction

The *ṭabaqāt* genre has been one of the most productive genres of the Islamic literary tradition. Compiled on the basis of chronological principles of organisation and using generic criteria for selection, these works take the form of collections of biographies.¹ *Ṭabaqāt* writings invariably depict the past of a particular tradition of religious affiliation or scholarship, the chronological parameters of which conventionally stretch from an authoritative starting-point to the generation (*ṭabaqa*) immediately preceding the assumed author. What is perhaps most remarkable about this genre is that generation after generation of successors in each particular tradition have compiled their own *ṭabaqāt* works, thereby producing a constant supply of versions of the same period of history, only extended by a generation each time.

The sheer vastness of this corpus of literature has meant that its use is widespread. In particular, they tend to be used as sources of 'ready-made' biographies of medieval scholars. Many historians have treated such works, for the sake of convenience, as more-or-less accurate 'databanks' with which to reconstruct the history of the periods they depict.² However, in view of recent developments in literary criticism and its increasing influence on the study of Islamic historiography it seems untenable to assume 'the immediate equivalence of word and world'.³ Despite its undoubted importance in the Islamic literary tradition, there has so far been no monograph-length study devoted to the *ṭabaqāt* genre which serves to identify its essential characteristics and functions. In this study I have explored these issues by means of the literary study of a single, neatly-defined and representative group of texts, namely the tradition of *ṭabaqāt* writing about the past of Sufism.

The six *ṭabaqāt* writings considered in this study constitute the main tradition of Sufi historiography. They thus occupy a position of importance comparable to the *ṭabaqāt* writings of each of the main religious traditions of Islam, such as the legal schools. Moreover, they share the same basic literary characteristics, in that they consist of the biographies of past representatives arranged in a predominantly chronological pattern. Within such a context, each biography serves to convey information both about its individual subject as well as about the community to which he or she belongs, whilst at the same time constituting an integral part of the linear narrative about the past of that community which is expressed by this arrangement. By focusing in detail on the structural characteristics of each of the six major *ṭabaqāt* writings of the Sufi tradition and the inter-relationships between them, it is anticipated that conclusions may be reached which are also applicable to the wider use of the genre.

This book is divided into three parts. Part One consists of three chapters, each devoted to a work traditionally ascribed to an eleventh century author. Chapter One is a study of Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī's (d.412/1021) *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, the earliest example of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre. Chapter Two examines the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, which is traditionally ascribed to Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d.430/1038), focusing on the portion of the (ten-volume) *Hilya* which corresponds to the scope of the whole of Sulamī's work. Chapter Three considers the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, which is traditionally ascribed to 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī (d.481/1089). This is the first Persian work of the genre, and is often considered to be essentially a Persian version of its earlier namesake. The three works discussed in Part One, by virtue of being the earliest examples of Sufi *ṭabaqāt* works, tend to be used as authoritative sources of information about the early history of Sufism. This study highlights the organisational structures of these works and the characteristics of their basic units of material, in order to evaluate their literary functions and re-assess their historical significance. Moreover, a significant issue which is afforded considerable attention in Part One is the degree of authorial control apparent in the surviving forms of the works concerned.

Part Two consists of two chapters, devoted to *ṭabaqāt* writings, each of which constitute one component section of an eleventh century Sufi manual. Chapter Four is a study of the *ṭabaqāt* section of Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī's (d.465/1072) *Risāla*, and Chapter

Five that of the *ṭabaqāt* section of 'Alī 'l-Hujwīrī's (d.ca.467/1074) *Kashf al-mahjūb*.⁴ These two works have proven through the centuries to be the most popular works of their kind in Arabic and Persian respectively. The relationship between the *ṭabaqāt* section and the remainder of each of these two works is examined in order to demonstrate the functions of this genre of writing, highlighted within such a literary context.

Part Three consists of one chapter, Chapter Six, which deals with 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī's (d.898/1492) *Nafahāt al-uns*. This Persian work represents a fifteenth century revival of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre. More specifically, Jāmī introduces it as the direct successor of the aforementioned Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, which is traditionally ascribed to Anṣārī. Its biographies of Sufis living before the twelfth century constitute a redaction of that earlier work, whereas the remainder of the *Nafahāt* covers the period between the twelfth and the late fifteenth century. Chapter Six demonstrates the way in which the earlier work has been re-contextualised, by identifying the priorities of the redaction and highlighting the way in which the earlier work was actually utilised as a source, in contrast to the way in which it was classified. The organisational framework of the remainder of Jāmī's *Nafahāt* is also considered, in order to observe how the biographies of the later Sufis that have been added are linked back to those of Sufis living before the twelfth century in a manner which is characteristic of the *ṭabaqāt* genre.

The six works examined here represent a cohesive tradition of writing. Most of them include explicit cross-references to each other. The *Hilyat al-awliyā'* includes a specific reference to Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, which implies that this ten-volume work reached its final form after the completion of its considerably shorter counterpart.⁵ The title of the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* in itself is an indication of the influence upon it from its Arabic precursor, which is also evident in the predominant principle of organisation of its biographies. Although Qushayrī prefers to use the expression of oral transmission, the *ṭabaqāt* section of his *Risāla*, in both form and content, is based closely on Sulamī's work.⁶ Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb* includes a specific cross-reference to the arrangement of biographies in both Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* and Qushayrī's *Risāla*;⁷ and, as mentioned above, Jāmī identifies his own work as the successor of the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, which, in turn, he classifies as the successor of Sulamī's foundational work of the genre.⁸

The analysis in each chapter of this study follows the same principle of focusing in ever-increasing detail on the individual text concerned; at first, the organisational framework is examined, followed by the overall structure of a representative biography, and culminating in the scrutiny of the individual 'building-block' segments of the text concerned. The decision to number the component sections of each chapter, rather than to label them with headings, is because each chapter's analysis proceeds according to a corresponding sequence of stages. The biographies of Abū Yazīd al-Bastāmī⁹ (d.261/874) and Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd (d.297/910) have been selected as the representative biographies for each of the works considered. This serves to facilitate a direct comparison of the form and content of corresponding material in each work, as well as to monitor the development of these two specific biographical traditions.

In the three chapters of Part One additional attention is given to the re-assessment of the historical value of the texts concerned. This involves the observation of the recurrence of variants and common motifs, as well as the *Sitz im Leben* suggested by the structures of the text and the purported methods (predominantly oral) by means of which its material was generated and transmitted. The two chapters of Part Two include additional discussions of the implications of the juxtaposition of the *tabaqāt* genre next to further component sections of the same work which belong to alternative genres. This includes comparisons of the ways in which material about Abū Yazīd, Junayd and others has been selected and arranged in the different sections of the work concerned.

In my analyses I deconstruct each *tabaqāt* work to distinguish its organisational structures and biographical content, and to demarcate the divisions between the discrete segments which constitute the latter. In addition to shedding light on the process of compilation of each work and highlighting the overall context in which discrete items are embedded, this approach facilitates the comparison between different works 'of like with like' in an appropriate and relevant manner. That is to say, the organisational framework, the overall structure and component sections of an individual biography as well as its discrete segments of material are compared with their respective counterparts in the other works. Although the significance of precise distinctions between the different levels of structure in a particular text may not be immediately clear in isolation, it should become increasingly

apparent as the inter-relationships with other texts of the genre and the development of specific biographical traditions are explored in further detail.

Whilst this book is a study of a historiographical genre, it also unavoidably contains a certain amount of the narration of history in the form of the biographies of the authors of the individual works that are under scrutiny. I have attempted to restrict these biographies to the bare minimum, and to make explicit the sources for individual items of information as well as to point out the growth and development of such details, where applicable. At the cost of the frequent use of expressions of qualification, such as 'attributed' and 'alleged', I have given priority to maintaining consistency with my observations in this study of the historical value in general of biographical genres. This approach has the benefit of guarding against the influence of later biographies of the authors on the interpretation of their surviving works. On the same principle, in the exploration of the processes of their compilation the actual structures of the individual texts are given precedence over the accounts provided ostensibly by their assumed authors, as well as those offered in later biographical sources; the latter, and any additional sources, are taken into consideration only in so far as they correspond to the structures of the surviving texts, which serve as the most authoritative points of reference regarding their own history and composition. As Hans-Georg Gadamer sums up such an approach:

[I]t is a basic principle for the historian that tradition is to be interpreted in another sense than the texts, of themselves, call for. He will always go back behind them and the meaning they express to enquire into the reality of which they are the involuntary expression.¹⁰

An earlier version of parts of Chapter Three was presented at *Societas Iranologica Europaea*: third European conference of Iranian Studies (University of Cambridge, 1995), and was subsequently published in its proceedings (Ed. C.Melville; Weisbaden, 1999). An earlier version of parts of Chapter Four was presented at the 209th meeting of the American Oriental Society (Baltimore, 1999), and has been published in *Studia Islamica*.¹¹

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Part One

All these memories, superimposed upon one another, now formed a single mass, but had not so far coalesced that I could not discern between them – between my oldest, my instinctive memories, and those others, inspired more recently by a taste or 'perfume', and finally those which were actually the memories of another person from whom I had acquired them at second hand – if not real fissures, real geological faults, at least that veining, that variegation of colouring, which in certain rocks, in certain blocks of marble, points to differences of origin, age and formation.

(Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of things past*, Vol. I, p.203)

Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*

I

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (d.412/1021) was an eleventh century Sufi scholar from Nishapur. Over twenty works that are ascribed to him have survived.¹ Whilst little is known about the events of his life,² it would appear that he was greatly revered by his fellow-citizens; his biography in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's (d.463/1071) *Ta'riḥ Baghdad* mentions that his grave in Nishapur had already become a pilgrimage destination.³ It also specifies that the grave was located within a small monastery (*duwayra*)⁴ which was named after Sulamī. The monastery may have been established only after his death as an extension of the grave, or it may even have been the place where he had taught and compiled his works.

The inclusion of a biography of Sulamī in the *Ta'riḥ Baghdad* is apparently on account of his visits to that city, when he would transmit reports about the Sufi leaders of Khurasan to the scholars of Baghdad (*wa-ḥaddatha bihā 'an shuyūkh Khurāsān*).⁵ Such occasions could also have provided an opportunity for him to collect reports about the Sufis of Baghdad, which account for a substantial proportion of the contents of his own works.

Sulamī took his *nisba* (title denoting descent), by which he is commonly known, from his maternal grandfather, Ismā'īl b. Nujayd al-Sulamī (d.365/976), who is usually referred to as Ibn Nujayd.⁶ He describes the latter as one of the eminent followers of Abū 'Uthmān al-Ḥīrī (d.298/910), 'who spread the Sufi path in Nishapur'.⁷ Ibn Nujayd is often classified in later tradition as a member of the *Malāmatiyya* (the people of blame),⁸ and a treatise about this group is in fact counted amongst Sulamī's own surviving

works. It confirms that he himself was at least familiar with the term and its connotations.⁹ Ibn Nujayd is likely then to have been an important early influence on Sulamī, perhaps even as his first teacher in Sufism. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1162), over a century later, informs us that Ibn Nujayd was also very wealthy, and that Sulamī's mother was the sole heir to his fortune.¹⁰ In this way, he may have provided the resources for his grandson to pursue his interest in Sufi scholarship, as well as the original inspiration.

Although Sulamī is claimed as one of their own as much by Shafi'ite as by Sufi biographers, his surviving works indicate that he was primarily a Sufi. In fact, the aforementioned *Risālat al-Malāmatiyya*, as well as the *Kitāb al-samā'*,¹¹ which is the earliest surviving monograph on Sufi musical audition, suggest that he was immersed in Sufism to an extent that he took an interest even in the more contentious aspects of the tradition.¹² The two works that are most often mentioned by name in his medieval biographies are the *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, a work of mystical exegesis,¹³ and the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, a collection of biographies of Sufis.¹⁴ The latter, as the earliest example of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre, is arguably Sulamī's most influential work.

II

The *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* is a collection of 103 biographies of Sufis.¹⁵ The biographies are grouped into five consecutively numbered sections called *ṭabaqāt* (generations) (See Fig.1), framed by an introduction at the beginning of the work and a postscript at the end. The first four of Sulamī's generation sections are each made up of 20 biographies.¹⁶ The fifth generation section consists of 23 biographies.¹⁷ This final section contains an excess of biographies perhaps because, since it represents the generation closest to the time in which the work was compiled, it proved too difficult to restrict to only twenty biographies. That is, Sulamī may have intended to include only twenty biographies in each section, but decided to make the final generation the exception.

The introduction of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* describes the work as consisting of 100 biographies divided into five 'generations', each made up of 20 biographies (*aj' aluh 'alā khamṣ ṭabaqāt . . . wa-adhkur fī kull ṭabaqāt 'ashrīn shaykhan*).¹⁸ Moreover, in the postscript it is

stated that each biography contains 'about twenty segments (*ḥikāyat*)', despite the fact that this is clearly not the case for most of them.¹⁹ The evident discrepancies are perhaps due to the wish to offer a neat and balanced account of the methodology applied in the compilation of the work.

Most of the biographies in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* offer the date of their subject's death.²⁰ An examination of these dates shows that Sulamī's five generations cover a period extending back from the late 4th/10th century to the late 2nd/8th century. That is to say, the earliest of the first generation lived in the eighth century, whilst the latest of the fifth generation lived in the late tenth century. It is perhaps to be expected that the latest ones to be included should be the immediate predecessors of Sulamī, but the reason why the earliest of them should be from the eighth century is not self-evident. An explanation is provided in the introduction of the work, where it is stated that Muhammad, the last of the prophets, was succeeded by saints (*wa-atba'a 'l-anbiyā' 'alayhim al-salām bi-'l-awliyā'*),²¹ and that the first three generations of these 'saints' were the *ṣaḥāba* (the Prophet's companions), the *tābi'ūn* (the successors of the *ṣaḥāba*) and the *tābi'ū 'l-tābi'in* (the successors of the successors) respectively. The latter constitute the same three 'generations' who are known collectively as the 'pious predecessors' (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), and are considered to be the religious successors to Muhammad in the Sunnī tradition.²² The continuation of the introduction concerns the position of the individuals included in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* in relation to the *salaf* in the image of the past that is being structured:

I already mentioned, in the *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, the *ṣaḥāba*, the *tābi'ūn* and the *tābi'ū 'l-tābi'in*, century by century and generation by generation, until the turn of those endowed with mystical states (*aḥwāl*), who speak about unicity (*tafrīd*), the truths of unity (*tawḥīd*) and the application of the methods of detachment (*tajrīd*). I therefore wished to compile a book about the lives of the later *awliyā'*, which I name *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*.

(TABS, 5.7–10)

The Sufis whose biographies are contained in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* are thus presented as the successors of the *salaf*, who are said to have been the subject of an earlier work by Sulamī, entitled the *Kitāb al-Zuhd*.²³ It is implied that the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* is its sequel,

and that the Sufis it includes are therefore successors ultimately of the Prophet himself, through those three intermediary *salaf* generations. This serves to explain the fact that the earliest individuals to be included in the *Ṭabaqāt* are from the eighth century, and it takes a form that one would expect from the representative of any Sunni Muslim tradition; Sulamī is depicting the past of his own specific tradition as extending back to the time of the prophet of Islam, by a method, or route, that serves to attribute to Sufism the same foundations as Sunni Islam. The Sufis included in the *Ṭabaqāt* are the 'later *awliyā'*', who are characterised as being 'those endowed with mystical states, who speak about unicity, the truths of unity and the application of the methods of detachment', with the implication that these are their distinctive qualities in relation to those who preceded them.

It is perhaps best to return to the actual structure of the work itself, in order to gain an insight into the methodology that has been applied (see Fig.1). The criteria used for grouping biographies into the five generation sections is particularly instructive. The members of Sulamī's fifth generation section, for whom dates are supplied in the *Ṭabaqāt* itself, are said to have died between the years 378/988 and 341/952;²⁴ his fourth generation section between 340/951 and 328/940;²⁵ his third generation section between 330/941 and 291/903;²⁶ and his second generation section between 319/931 and 283/896.²⁷ Thus a sequential pattern through time emerges in the last four sections, each of which is made up of the biographies of individuals who could actually have been contemporaries.²⁸

It is at this point that Sulamī's first generation stands out as being especially problematic. This is because it includes not only the biographies of individuals from the third/ninth century (e.g. Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār (d.271/884)) as one would expect from the sequential pattern in the other generation sections of the work (which represent a gradual recession in time), but also those of individuals from as early as the second/eighth century (e.g. al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād, d.178/803). The pattern is broken by the inclusion of the biographies of these earliest figures, who could not possibly have belonged to the same actual generation as Qaṣṣār and his contemporaries, together with whom they have been grouped into the same 'generation'. One can therefore see that the first generation is anomalous for the opposite reasons to the final generation; whilst the latter is overlong in terms of the number of

biographies it contains for the same (relatively short) time span, the former is overlong in terms of the time-span covered by its selection of twenty individuals.

Rather than adding extra sections, Sulamī has decided to cover a period of over a century in a single generation section. There is no inherent reason why he should have restricted himself to five generation sections. It may be then that brevity in general was a priority, or there may have been a scarcity of Sufis from the earliest period (he needed twenty). The fact that it is the first generation section which is anomalous in this way suggests that it was the most difficult to assemble, with regard to structuring a credible 'generation'. The inclusion of the biographies of individuals from the eighth century causes the break up of the established pattern of gradual recession, so it suggests that they were considered necessary by Sulamī in spite of this. This was probably because representatives of the Sufis from this period would be required in order to bridge a continuity with the *salaf*. In theory, it would be possible for individuals living in the eighth century to have met and obtained authority from the *tābi'ū 'l-tābi'in*, the final generation of the *salaf*. The irregularity of the first generation section indicates also that the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* was not in fact a straight-forward sequel to an earlier work, written 'generation by generation' as its introduction suggests. Rather it appears to be a backreading of the past of Sufism, from the standpoint of the early fifth/eleventh century, with the ultimate goal of reaching as far back as the authoritative *salaf*.²⁹

Although the generation sections of Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* are presented in a chronological sequence, the individual biographies within them are plainly not. Their order may appear at first to be arbitrary, but when one compares their length, one can observe that the longest ones are positioned either right at the head, or at least towards the beginning of each generation, thus suggesting a hierarchical pattern. The more interesting biographies – the ones that have attracted the most material – are given first in each generation. In addition to this organisational principle, and often modifying it, the biographies of individuals who are said to have had something in common, or to have had dealings with each other, are often juxtaposed (e.g. Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'l-Kattānī (d.320/932), Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Nahrajūrī (d.330/941) and 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Muzayyin (d.328/939), each of whom died in Mecca).³⁰

The individuals whose biographies are at the head of the third, fourth and fifth generations have another significant factor in common.³¹ They are each said to have associated with, and thus obtained authority from (*ṣaḥība*),³² the head of the second generation, Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd (d.297/910). Junayd is the first person in the list of the 'authoritative associates' of Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī (d.341/952), the head of the fifth generation. He is the only one named for Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d.334/945), the head of the fourth generation. Al-Jurayrī (d.311/924), the head of the third generation, is said to have been the immediate successor to Junayd.³³

In his own biography, which is positioned at the head of the second generation, Junayd is said to have been approved by everyone (*wa-maqbūl 'alā jamī' al-alsina*). It is also stated that he was a jurist who practised according to the school of Abū Thawr (d. 240/854).³⁴ Whilst there may be no corroboration for them, in this context, such assertions serve as methods of legitimization. Regardless of whether or not they are based on historical facts, they make it clear why association with Junayd could be especially valuable for members of later generations – in order that they too might be considered authoritative. The overall effect is that Junayd is presented in this schema as the most important Sufi of his own time, from whom the pre-eminent tradition of later generations acquired authority.

Sulamī's choice of 'head biographies' most likely indicates a personal preference. It is significant, in this regard, that the individuals whose biographies are at the head of the last four sections are mostly from Baghdad. Although the *Ṭabaqāt* includes nearly twice as many Khurasanians to Baghdadians, the biographies of the latter are consistently placed in positions of greater prominence in the hierarchical structure of each generation.³⁵ Junayd, Jurayrī and Shiblī are each said to be from Baghdad, as well as the individuals who follow immediately after them (see Fig.1). Ibn al-A'rābī is described as a student of Junayd, but he is said to have settled in Mecca. His biography is followed by that of someone else who is said to have settled in Mecca, namely Abū 'Amr al-Zajjājī. (This common factor probably accounts for the position of prominence of the latter's biography). The third biography, which is also the longest in this generation, is that of Ja'far al-Khuldī from Baghdad, a major transmitter of biographical material about Junayd.³⁶ On the whole, therefore, the order of

biographies in the *Ṭabaqāt* suggests a preference for the Sufis of Baghdad, particularly those who can be associated with Junayd. This is not altogether surprising in view of the aforementioned report of Sulamī's visits to Baghdad, where he was considered a noteworthy scholar. The *Ṭabaqāt* also reveals a special interest in Shiblī, for, not only is his biography 'the head' of the fourth generation, but it is also the longest biography in the whole work by a considerable margin. It would appear to be in keeping with his authorship of works on contentious topics, that Sulamī should show a special interest in one of the most controversial Sufis of Baghdad.³⁷

As already mentioned, the biography which is placed at the head of the final generation is that of Ibn al-A'rābī. It is significant that he should be chosen in preference to Sulamī's grandfather, Ibn Nujayd, and Naṣrābādhī, not to mention the aforementioned Khuldī. In his biography, Ibn A'rābī is described as a scholar who compiled many works about the Sufis (*wa-ṣannaḥa li-'l-qawm kutuban kathīra*).³⁸ Moreover, in another source from this period, the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, he is attributed with a (no longer extant) work called the *Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk*.³⁹ The title suggests that it could have belonged to the same genre as the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. Therefore, an explanation for the position of his biography is that Sulamī may have wished to position a scholar amongst the Sufis (like himself) at the head of this final generation. That is to say, the choice of Ibn A'rābī as the head of the final generation section is an indication of the importance which Sulamī accorded to Sufi scholarship, the notion of 'scholarship' here being history and continuity.⁴⁰

The anomalous first generation section also deserves a mention, with regard to the hierarchical order, for despite the inclusion of the biographies of Sarī 'l-Saqāṭī (d.251/865) and al-Hārith al-Muḥāsibī (d.243/857), who are both remembered as teachers of Junayd, they are not positioned at the head, as one might expect from the pattern in the remainder of the work. In fact, they are only the fifth and sixth biographies, respectively, being preceded, in order, by the biographies of al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ, Ibrāhīm b. Adham, Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī and Bishr b. al-Hārith.⁴¹ The precedence of three of these biographies (all apart from Dhū 'l-Nūn) is probably due to the anomalous nature of this section, in that it includes figures from the 2nd/8th century as well as those from the 3rd/9th century, and consequently is not determined simply by the application of a hierarchical principle to a selection of contemporaries. The date

given for Fuḍayl's death is the earliest provided in the work at 178/803; although a date is not supplied in this work for Ibn Adham, his death has already been dated as 161/777–8 in an earlier source.⁴² Moreover, Sulamī mentions that, whilst in Mecca, he was an associate of Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.161/777–8)⁴³ and Fuḍayl (*kharāj ilā Makka wa-ṣaḥība bihā Sufyān al-Thawrī wa-l-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād*).⁴⁴ Bishr b. al-Hārith (d.227/841) is also linked back to Fuḍayl, and this association is probably responsible for the position of his biography in the section.⁴⁵ However, the position of Dhū 'l-Nūn (d.245/860) biography, which is also the longest in the first generation, cannot be accounted for simply on the basis of chronology. It would appear that Dhū 'l-Nūn was held in particularly high esteem, even in relation to his contemporaries Saqātī and Muḥāsibī, the teachers of Junayd.

It is important to point out at this stage the lack of corroboration for the implication that the eighth century figures included in the *Ṭabaqāt* were actually Sufis at all. For instance, Abū Muḥammad b. Qutayba (d.276/889) includes, in his work entitled *al-Ma'ārif*, a biography for only one of these figures, namely Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād.⁴⁶ Writing in the ninth century with a specific interest in diverse groups of Muslims, Ibn Qutayba shows no knowledge of the existence of Sufism. In fact, he classifies Fuḍayl as a traditionalist (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*), and indicates only that he was devoted to God (*ta'abbada*). A reference to Ibrāhīm b. Adham is also included in this work, but merely to inform that he was the father-in-law of Ibn Kunāsa (d.207/821), who is classified amongst the transmitters of poetry (*ruwāt al-shi'r*).⁴⁷ Moreover, Michael Bonner has shown recently that Ibn Adham's biographical tradition, prior to Sulamī, depicts him as a 'frontier ascetic', whose main preoccupation was maintaining dietary purity (*al-ḥalāl al-maḥd*).⁴⁸ All of this suggests that, whilst they were both well-known figures, neither Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād nor Ibrāhīm b. Adham were renowned for being Sufis by the ninth century, and that the Sufi tradition itself may not yet have been clearly defined as a distinct form of Muslim piety.⁴⁹ The inclusion, at the beginning of the same generation section which represents the ninth century, of figures from as far back as the eighth century, rather than a whole new section of twenty individuals devoted to their time, can therefore be understood as a sign of their adoption by the Sufi tradition, in order to fulfil the specific task of bridging the gap between the emergence of Sufism and the generations of the *salaf*.⁵⁰

The organisational framework created by Sulamī suggests the functions of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. Successive generations (*ṭabaqāt*) serve to present his selection of immediate predecessors (in the fifth generation section) as the successors ultimately of the Prophet himself, through the four preceding 'generations' of Sufis and the *salaf*. The individuals whom Sulamī has selected from the period covered are mostly from Khurasan and Iraq, indicating his own areas of expertise and preferences. They include a number of eighth century pietists and ascetics as well as later mystics. As one might expect from Sulamī, he sketches a relatively accommodating definition of Sufism through his selection of members of the diachronic community. This is indicated by his inclusion of a biography of al-Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d.309/922), which, as will be shown in the course of this study, becomes a contentious issue in *ṭabaqāt* writings.⁵¹ In fact, Sulamī's biography of Ḥallāj itself begins with an acknowledgement of the existence of differences of opinion over whether or not he should be accepted (*mukhtalifūn fī amrih*). Sulamī identifies only the authorities in favour of Ḥallāj, and proceeds to devote a relatively substantial (five-pages in the printed edition) biography to him, betraying little evidence of self-censorship.⁵² The mention of authoritative figures in support of Ḥallāj may be seen to serve, on a microcosmic level, a similar function to the linking back of Sufism to the *salaf*. By grounding on secure foundations the biographical tradition of Ḥallāj, just as the account of the Sufi tradition as a whole, Sulamī enables a broadly-defined and accommodating depiction in each case.

It has already been observed that the form of the *Ṭabaqāt* allows, through its generation structures, the use of a hierarchical pattern in the ordering of biographies, and this serves to promote a Baghdadian tradition centred on Junayd as the pre-eminent tradition of Sufism. Sulamī takes advantage of this pattern also to emphasise the importance of his own area of expertise by his choice of Ibn A'rābī as the head of the final generation, thus exemplifying the following comment by Norman Calder:

The apparent backward orientation was in fact an orientation towards the future, for it was a legitimate expectation (and one proved in the event) of each new generation of scholars, that the best of them would be constitutive of the past of coming generations.⁵³

The organisational framework of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* offers a relatively ordered and coherent account of the past of Sufism, the unity and cohesiveness of which suggest the creative force of a re-reading of the past.

III

The majority of biographies in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* consist of three parts: the introduction, the hadith transmission, and the body of the biography.⁵⁴ Since these divisions correspond also to those of the biographies of the other works of the *ṭabaqāt* genre discussed in this study, they will now be introduced in order of appearance for ease of cross-reference. To begin with, the introductions of the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd, being representative examples, are discussed at length. It should be noted that Abū Yazīd is the eighth member of the first generation section, whilst Junayd is the head of the second generation section.

AY Amongst them (the first 'generation' of Sufis) is Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. 'Īsā b. Surūshān. His grandfather, Surūshān, was a Magian who converted to Islam. They were three brothers: Ādam, Ṭayfūr and 'Alī, and all of them were ascetics (*zuhhād*) and pietists (*'ubbād*), and were endowed with mystical states (*arbāb al-ahwāl*). He was from Baṣṭām. He died in the year 261 according to what I heard 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī say, who heard Ṭayfūr b. 'Īsā 'l-Ṣaghīr say that he heard 'Ammī 'l-Baṣṭāmī say that he heard his father say, Abū Yazīd died in the year 261. I heard al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā say, Abū Yazīd died in the year 234. God knows best concerning it.

(TABS, 60.1-10)

J Amongst them (the second 'generation' of Sufis) is al-Junayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Junayd Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Khazzāz. His father used to sell glass and so he was called *al-qawārīnī* (the glass trader). His origins are from Nihavand, but he was born and brought up in Iraq. I heard Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Naṣrābādhī say that. He was a jurist (*faqīh*) and used to practise according to [the method of] Abū Thawr.⁵⁵ He used to give fatwas in his circle (*kāna yuftī fī ḥalqatih*).⁵⁶ He followed (*ṣaḥiba*) Sarī 'l-Saqatī, Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and

Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'l-Qaṣṣāb al-Baghdādī. He was one of the leaders and chiefs of the group (the Sufis) and is acceptable 'on all tongues' (*wa-maqbūl 'alā jamī' al-alsina*). He died in 297 on 'the Caliph's New Year's Day',⁵⁷ which was a Saturday. It is also said that he died in the last hour of Friday and was buried on Saturday. I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan b. Miqṣam mention that.

(TABS, 141.1-142.2)

The above introductions are typical of those found in this work, in that they offer a biographical summary in the form of a list of statements which encompass a limited range of information. Both of them begin with onomastic details, followed by information about where the subject lived and a brief characterisation. Moreover, the date of the subject's death marks the close of each introduction. These types of information are invariably included in introductions to biographies in this work.

Another type of information which is usually offered, as in the above introduction to Junayd, is the name of the individuals, through association with whom (*ṣaḥiba*) the subject himself acquires authority in Sufism.⁵⁸ Such associations serve also to enhance cohesiveness between separate biographies, especially across generations, by linking members of later ones to their predecessors. Junayd, in this way, is linked back to Saqatī, his maternal uncle,⁵⁹ and Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī,⁶⁰ whose inclusion in the first generation has already been noted, as well as to the lesser-known Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'l-Qaṣṣāb.⁶¹ The omission of this type of information from the introduction to Abū Yazīd does not weaken the cohesion between the biographies in this work, for he is himself already a member of the first generation.⁶²

Introductions to biographies, each one beginning with the phrase *wa-minhum* followed by the name of the subject, serve also as their demarcators. In this respect they are part of the overall organisational framework, or 'architecture', of the work, rather than its 'building-blocks'. Similarly to the organisation of the biographies, their introductions are relatively uniform, allowing for the fact that the same specific types of biographical information (e.g. date of death) may not have been known about every single individual. (This distinction between 'architecture' and 'building blocks' will become all the more important when Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* is compared with works that have been influenced by it).⁶³

The hadith transmission, when provided, follows immediately after the introduction.⁶⁴ The biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd, like the majority of biographies in the *Ṭabaqāt* that include hadith transmissions, each contain one hadith.⁶⁵ That of the biography of Junayd is presented below, as a typical example.⁶⁶

He (Junayd) transmitted the [following] hadith: Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥāfiẓ related to me, saying that Bakr b. Khalaf related to him that Bukayr b. Aḥmad al-Ḥaddād 'the Sufi' related to him in Mecca, that al-Junayd b. Muḥammad Abū 'l-Qāsim 'the Sufi' related to him that al-Ḥasan b. 'Arafa related to him that Muḥammad b. Kuthayyir al-Kūfī related to him on the authority of 'Amr b. Qays al-Mallā'i, on the authority of 'Aṭiya, on the authority of Abū Sa'īd, who said that the Messenger of God said, Beware of the insight of the believer for he sees by the light of God! And he recited, There are signs in that for those who look closely (li-'l-mutawassimīn),⁶⁷ saying, For those who have insight (li-'l-mutaḥarrisīn; thereby explaining the relationship between the prophetic dictum and the Qur'anic verse).

(TABS, 142.2–8)

The above hadith transmission is typical of those found in the *Ṭabaqāt*, in that it consists of only a brief introductory statement (*wa-asnada 'l-ḥadīth*)⁶⁸ followed by the hadith itself, and it possesses an *isnād* (chain of authority) stretching from the time of Sulamī back to the time of the Prophet, and including the subject of the biography (in this case, Junayd).⁶⁹ In this way, the subject of the biography and Sulamī are both linked back to the time of the Prophet, as well as to each other.

The text (*matn*) of this particular hadith informs of the lofty nature of *firāsa* (miraculous insight), which is a recurrent topic in Sufi literature.⁷⁰ However, it should be pointed out that many of the hadiths presented in the *Ṭabaqāt* are not related specifically to Sufism at all.⁷¹ Their inclusion is not therefore simply on account of the appropriateness of their *matns* for a Sufi work. Rather, it is probably influenced by earlier *ṭabaqāt* writings (i.e. outside of the Sufi tradition), which were often closely related to the study of *isnāds*.⁷² Moreover, it serves the function of legitimation, by implying that hadiths are a vitally important source for Sufism and asserting that exemplary Sufis shared with religious scholars an interest in collecting and transmitting them.⁷³ The hadiths also

serve to link Sufis through their *isnāds* back to the time of the Prophet via the *salaf* generations, thereby encapsulating the function of the overall framework of the *Ṭabaqāt*.

IV

As mentioned earlier, biographies in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* can be divided into three parts; the introduction, the hadith transmission and the main body. This latter accounts for most of the material in any given biography. The body of each biography is made up of discrete segments juxtaposed, as exemplified by the following passage:

- 1 I heard Abū 'l-Husayn al-Fārisī say that he heard al-Ḥasan b. 'Allūya say, Abū Yazīd was asked, By means of which thing did you find this gnosis (*ma'rifa*)? He said, By a hungry stomach and a naked body.
- 2 And, on the authority of this *isnād*, Abū Yazīd said, The gnostic's concern (*al-'arīf hammuh*) is with what he hopes for, whilst the ascetic's concern (*al-zāhid hammuh*) is with what he eats.
- 3 And Abū Yazīd said, Blessed is the one who has only one concern (*hamman wāḥidan*), and whose heart is not distracted (*lam yushghal*) with what his eyes see and what his ears hear.
- 4 And Abū Yazīd said, The one who has gnosis of God (*man 'arafa 'llāh*) renounces (*yazhud*) everything that distracts him from him (*yushghiluh 'anh*).
- 5 And Abū Yazīd was asked about the normative example (*sunna*) and the obligatory ordinance (*ḥaḍḥ*). He said, The normative example lies in abandoning the world (*tark al-dunyā*), and the obligatory ordinance lies in following the master (*al-ṣuḥba ma'a 'l-mawlā*), because the entirety of the normative example guides towards abandoning the world, whilst the whole of the book (i.e. the Qur'an) guides towards following the master. Whoever has learnt the normative example and the obligatory ordinance has become complete.

(TABS, 66.8–67.6)⁷⁴

The above passage from the biography of Abū Yazīd can be divided into five discrete segments, as shown. Several observations can be

made. To begin with, one can distinguish three types of introductions to segments. Segment 1 is introduced by an *isnād*. The introduction of Segment 2 explicitly claims the authority of that *isnād* by the phrase *wa-bi-isnādh*. The remaining segments are introduced by the simple conjunction *wa-*. In fact, out of the thirty-one segments in the biography of Abū Yazīd, ten are introduced by an *isnād*, two by an introduction that explicitly claims the authority of a preceding *isnād* (as in Segment 2), twelve by the simple conjunction *wa-*, and the remaining seven by a further type of introduction that is not represented above, namely *qāla wa-*.⁷⁵ The latter formula implies that the narrator (the subject of *qāla*) is someone other than the compiler, perhaps a transmitter from the preceding *isnād*, or even Sulamī himself. This distribution is representative of the segments found in the *Ṭabaqāt*, in that the majority of them neither possess their own *isnād*, nor claim explicitly the authority of a preceding one.⁷⁶

Whilst it may be convenient to assume that all of the segments following an *isnād*, and introduced by the simple formulae *wa-* and *qāla wa-*, are governed by that *isnād*, the actual use of these formulae often contradicts this assumption. An example of this is when the body of a biography actually begins with segments introduced merely by *wa-*, that is to say, it has no preceding *isnād* to which the *wa-* segment may be linked back.⁷⁷ One can also find juxtaposed segments with identical *isnāds* repeated in full, implying that the use of *qāla wa-* and *wa-* was not necessarily for the sake of brevity.⁷⁸ Moreover, the use of the aforementioned formulae which explicitly claim the authority of a preceding *isnād* (e.g. *wa-bi-isnādh* / *wa-bih*) demands further explanation for the inconsistency in their provision.⁷⁹ There does not appear to be a secure basis in the text itself, for what would certainly be a convenient interpretation. Whilst scholars who are concerned to identify sources through *isnāds* have opted for this approach, manuscripts of the *Ṭabaqāt* itself apparently exist which interpret segments as discrete units that can be re-shuffled, without concern for the affect this may have on their position in relation to preceding *isnāds*.⁸⁰

In any case, it is not necessary to rely solely on a common *isnād* theory to explain the order of segments, for those that are presented without their own *isnād* are usually associated in other ways with the segments next to which they are juxtaposed. For example, in the above passage, Segment 3 shares with Segment 2

the common use of the term *hamm*; Segment 4 shares with Segment 3 the common use of the verb *shaghala*, and is also related to Segment 2 through word-play involving the verbal roots 'arafa and zahada. Segment 5 is perhaps associated with the preceding segments through the recurring theme of renunciation (of what is other than God). However, it should also be underlined that, whilst thematic and key-word associations can account for the juxtaposition of a large proportion of the segments in the *Ṭabaqāt*, they do not account for every single instance. Nonetheless, their frequency indicates a common way in which segments may have become juxtaposed, both during transmission and compilation.

The body of the biography of Junayd has the highest proportion of segments that are provided with their own *isnāds*. Out of its thirty-four segments, twenty-five possess an *isnād*. This is perhaps another indication of the importance which Sulamī (and the preceding Sufi tradition) attached to Junayd. This biography highlights the tendency for the juxtaposition of segments possessing similar *isnāds*. For example, it contains two groups each consisting of three juxtaposed segments, the *isnāds* of which name the same final tradent.⁸¹ However, it also includes two further segments with that very same final tradent which are not juxtaposed.⁸² The biography of Shiblī, which is the longest in the whole of the *Ṭabaqāt*, contains twenty-five segments with their own *isnāds*, and included amongst them are four pairs of juxtaposed segments with the same final tradent. However, with regard to three of these pairs, further segments of their kind are also included in the biography, but positioned apart from them.⁸³

The fact that segments possessing their own *isnāds* appear to have been juxtaposed frequently, though inconsistently, on account of them is comparable with the previously discussed instances of key-word and thematic associations between juxtaposed segments. It indicates that none of these principles was used as the definitive organising principle in the *Ṭabaqāt*. A possible explanation for their 'frequent yet inconsistent' application is that they may have been arranged in these ways in their respective sources (e.g. collections of segments, notebooks);⁸⁴ segments may have been filed subsequently into their relevant biographies in a relatively casual manner. The lack of a single, predominant method of organising segments could then have allowed traces of earlier principles of organisation to persist. It is also possible that the specific task of filling biographies with segments was carried out by a number of

individuals, perhaps Sulamī's own students, with little coordination between their efforts.⁸⁵

V

All of the segments in the biography of Abū Yazīd can be classified into either of the following broad categories: utterances and narratives. Utterances are the predominant category both in this biography and in the *Ṭabaqāt* as a whole. For instance, each of the segments in the passage presented above is an utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd. Segments of this category are often contextualised as an answer to a question, in which case the actual wording of the question is usually provided (e.g. Segment 1), rather than a summary (Segment 5). The majority of the utterances (e.g. Segments 2, 3, 4 and 6), however, are isolated statements.

Segment 3 in the above passage is the only example in this biography of a blessing. The biography of Abū Yazīd also includes utterances belonging to further types which are not represented in the above passage, such as short prayers,⁸⁶ *yā rabb aḥṣinī 'ank fa-innī lā aḥṣu 'ank illā bik* (Lord, make me understand you, for I do not understand you except by you!).⁸⁷ The longest of the utterances attributed to Abū Yazīd, which is presented below, is the sole example in his biography of another type of utterance, that of 'advice'.

One of Abū Yazīd's students (*talāmidha*) said, Abū Yazīd al-Baṣṭāmī told me, If a man who associates with you spoils your relationship, then go to him with your fine character and good manner. If you then receive favour, start to thank God, for he is the one who causes hearts to incline towards you. But if [instead] you suffer an affliction, then ask for his forgiveness, for he alone – not any creature – has the power to remove it.

(TABS, 65.8–66.2)

This advice is presented as a transmission by the student to whom it was addressed. Whilst the frequency of the question-answer construct in his biography itself already implies that Baṣṭāmī instructed students (*talāmidha*), the above segment makes this explicit. Advice of this kind inherently requires to be presented not just as an isolated utterance, but as one that is directed to an

impressionable individual, and this perhaps can account for the uniqueness of the explicit reference to 'one of the students' of Abū Yazīd. The provision of utterances of this type, which are relatively frequent in this work,⁸⁸ can be accounted for by Sulamī's own predilection for material about the social interaction of Sufis.⁸⁹

The above utterance, by virtue of taking the form of advice about a specific problem in the life of the student, involves the narration of his situation. It therefore shares some qualities of the other broad category of segment, namely the narrative. The same can be said for another type of utterance, the autobiographical report.⁹⁰ However, most of the narratives in the *Ṭabaqāt* describe a short sequence of events in the life of the subject of the biography as narrated by somebody else. That is to say, they are neither autobiographical utterances attributed to him, nor his narrations about events (real or hypothetical) in the lives of others. The sole example in the biography of Abū Yazīd is the following:

Abū Yazīd gave the call to prayer and then wished to give the *iqāma* (the second call to prayer). He looked at the row [of worshippers] and saw a man who looked like he was on a journey. He approached him and spoke to him about something (*kallamah bi-shay'*). The man got up and left the mosque. One of those present asked him about this. The man said, I was travelling and I could not find water, so I performed *tayammum* (dry ablution), and then forgot about it and entered the mosque. Abū Yazīd told me that *tayammum* is not permitted in a settled place. I remembered and left.

(TABS, 62.10–63.2)

In the above narrative, Abū Yazīd is depicted as the muezzin of a mosque who upholds strictly the requirements of the shariah; he prevents a member of the congregation from praying without having performed the appropriate kind of ablution. This narrative also attributes to Abū Yazīd the insight (*firāsa*) which enables him to know about the state of that man with regard to ritual purity. He is depicted as upholding a detail of the religious law, and in this way, the narrative offers an example of mysticism and the law in harmony. The fulfilment of this function is continued in the immediately subsequent segment, which is an utterance that attributes to Abū Yazīd the appreciation of the work of religious scholars (*'ulamā'*).

Abū Yazīd said, For thirty years I was active in battle against my carnal soul (*mujāhada*) and I did not find anything harder for me than scholastic knowledge and putting it into practice. If it were not for the differences of opinion of the scholars I would have remained behind. The differences of opinion of the scholars is a mercy (*wa-ikhtilāf al-‘ulamā’ rahma*), except with regard to stripping bare divine unity (*tajrīd al-tawhīd*).

(TABS, 63.2–5)

The above utterance emphasises the value of scholastic knowledge by testifying that its mastery is demanding – harder than thirty years of struggle against his carnal soul, and then only possible thanks to the (acceptable) differences of opinion of the scholars.⁹¹ This *ikhtilāf al-‘ulamā’* is described above as ‘a mercy’ (*rahma*) in the incorporation of a well-known saying.⁹² The final statement of the utterance is polemical, although the specific issue to which it refers is not self-evident, since, to my knowledge, this use of the expression (*tajrīd al-tawhīd*) is an isolated case in Sufi literature as far as this point in time. Nonetheless, the overall function of the segment in presenting Abū Yazīd as someone who was concerned with putting scholastic knowledge into practice, and was appreciative of the efforts of religious scholars, is unambiguous.⁹³

These last two segments to be considered are exceptional in Abū Yazīd’s biography for attributing to him scholastic concerns. The most frequently mentioned topic here is mystical knowledge (*ma’rifā*), often in the form of utterances celebrating the superiority of the gnostic (*‘ārif*) over other types of religious devotees (*zāhid*, *‘ābid*, *‘ālim*).⁹⁴

VI

The body of the biography of Junayd, like that of Abū Yazīd, is made up almost entirely of utterances. They include examples of each of the types encountered in the biography of Abū Yazīd (isolated statements, question-answer constructs, short prayers, advice). One utterance attributed to Junayd was perceived in a dream by the first transmitter,⁹⁵ according to its *isnād*:

I heard Abū ‘l-Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī say that he heard Ja‘far al-Khuldī say, I saw Junayd in a dream (*ra’aytu ‘l-Junayd fī ‘l-manām*), and I asked him, Are not the words of the prophets ‘allusions’ (*ishārāt*) on the authority of ‘witnessings’ (*mushāhadāt*)?⁹⁶ He smiled and said, The words of the prophets are reports (*naba’*) on the authority of presence (*ḥudūr*), and the words of the sincere ones (*ṣiddīqūn*)⁹⁷ are ‘allusions’ on the authority of ‘witnessings’.

(TABS, 147.6–10)

This utterance is presented with an *isnād* as a significant segment of material for the biography of Junayd, regardless of the fact that it is said to have been perceived in a dream. It is treated as being just as authoritative as an utterance witnessed in the (physical) presence of Junayd. The reason why this particular utterance is said to have been perceived in a dream, is certainly not, as is often the case, on account of any time-gap between the lifetime of the first transmitter (Khuldī) and that of Junayd.⁹⁸ It may be due then to the content of Junayd’s utterance; the segment depicts him as answering a question about the degree of authenticity of the speech of prophets, by pointing out that it is actually a degree higher than at first assumed by Khuldī. It implies that Junayd himself possesses the knowledge to confirm the relation between the prophets’ speech and what they describe. (It perhaps also serves to underline a conviction in the superiority of prophets over Sufis through attribution of such a comment to the highest ranking Sufi of all).⁹⁹ The provision of a dream context implies that such knowledge was attained by Junayd only after death, thereby avoiding its attribution to him while he was still alive, which could perhaps have been less acceptable. Finally, it should be mentioned that this utterance exemplifies common features amongst those attributed to Junayd, by virtue of its function of definition and its use of technical Sufi terms.

The biography of Junayd includes examples of a couple of segment belonging to categories that have not been encountered in the biography of Abū Yazīd. The first of these can be described as ‘epistolary’. The length and careful composition of this category of segments suggest literary origins, as they are typically made up of a series of balanced, rhyming clauses, and are often introduced as representing written correspondence to ‘one of his brethren’ (*kataba ‘l-Junayd ilā ba‘d ikhwānih*).¹⁰⁰

I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan say that he heard Ja'far say, Junayd wrote to one of his brethren [the following]: Whoever invites [people] to God whilst depending upon other than him, God puts him to the test and veils (*ḥajaba*) his remembrance from his heart whilst he performs it with his tongue. If he takes heed and separates from the one on whom he depends, and returns to the one to whom he invites, God will remove his trials and tribulation. But if he persists in his dependance (*sukūn*), God will strip away (*naza'a*) mercy for him from the hearts of the people, and clothe him (*albasah*) in 'the dress of greed'. Then his claim upon them will increase despite the loss of mercy from their hearts, and his life will become a failure, his death miserable, and his afterlife filled with regret. We take refuge in God from dependence on other than God.

(TABS, 147.10–148.5)¹⁰¹

This segment suggests that written correspondence between Sufis was already a familiar activity. Its attribution to Junayd is in keeping with his image as a Sufi who had widespread authority.¹⁰² The text of the segment reads like a sermon, warning of the consequences of hypocrisy in one's teaching; if one invites people to God, but depends oneself on someone other than God, then one will face tribulations. Junayd himself is thereby implicitly attributed with sincerity in his teaching, as well as the authority to advise other religious teachers.¹⁰³

The final category of segment to be mentioned is that of verse. The *Ṭabaqāt* as a whole actually contains many segments belonging to this category, although there are no examples in the biography of Abū Yazīd, nor strictly speaking in the biography of Junayd. The latter, however, does include a distich of verse, which serves as the conclusion of the following segment:

I heard Maṣṣūr b. 'Abdullāh say that he heard Abū 'Umar al-Anmāṭī say that a man asked Junayd, On account of what does the lover feel sorrowful, with regards to his mystical moments (*awqāt*). He replied, On account of the time of an expansion (*bast*) which brings on a contraction (*qabḍ*), or the time of an intimacy (*uns*) which brings on an estrangement (*wahṣha*). Then he composed (*ansha'a*) [the following], reciting:

*I had a drink which was becoming pure by the vision of you,
The power of time spoilt it once it had become pure.*

(TABS, 149.8–150.2)

The distich of verse serves to reinforce the theme of the preceding utterance, namely the transience of blissful experiences. Again one can observe the repeated use of technical Sufi terms in this definitive response attributed to Junayd. It also implies that Junayd composed the two hemistiches of verse, enhancing his portrayal as an erudite Sufi authority, who produced written compositions.

VII

There are a number of ways in which one can attempt to gain an insight into the social context, or *Sitz im Leben*, of Sulamī's collection and compilation of the material of his *Ṭabaqāt*. Rather than following the method of accepting at face value the accounts of later biographers of Sulamī, which are unlikely to be free from (inevitable) retrojection, a certain amount of clues about this process can be picked up from the *Ṭabaqāt* itself. In this regard, both the way in which segments are introduced by their *isnāds*, and the social settings that are described in their *matns* can be instructive.

As explained above, most of the segments are not provided with their own *isnād*, but when *isnāds* are given, the vast majority of them indicate oral transmission, usually by means of the formula, *sami'tu fulān yaqūl*. A few segments in other parts of the work specify that the context is that of a study circle (*ḥalqa*), such as the following, which is repeated three times in the biography of Shiblī: *kuntu yawman fī ḥalqatih wa-sami'tuh yaqūl . . .* (One day I was in his circle when I heard him (Shiblī) say . . .).¹⁰⁴ There are also a number of more elaborate descriptions of such situations, which often function to boost the standing of their subjects in relation to the other participants of a study circle. For example, the following comment is found in the introduction to the biography of Abū 'Amr al-Zajjājī:

I heard my grandfather say, I was in Mecca while al-Kattānī, al-Nahrajūrī and al-Murta'ish and other shaykhs (*mashā'ikh*) were there. They were sitting in a circle (*yaq'udūn ḥalqatan*), the focus (*ṣadr al-ḥalqa*) of which was Abū 'Amr. Whenever they spoke about something they all consulted what Abū 'Amr would say (*raja'a jamī'uhum ilā mā yaqūl Abū 'Amr*).

(TABS, 449.6–10)

This anecdote depicts Abū 'Amr (Zajjājī) as a Sufi whose superior status to the others present, including the eminent authorities Kattānī, Nahrajūrī and Murta'ish,¹⁰⁵ is indicated by their deference to him in consulting his opinion. Abū 'Amr is seated at the focus of the circle, and this is evidently where the leading authority of the gathering would sit.¹⁰⁶ It is also worthwhile to underline that the above anecdote suggests that, whilst the most authoritative participant may have been treated with deference, the teaching situation was what we would term (approvingly) today as 'interactive' – more of a 'seminar discussion' than a monologue.

Whilst the exact situation described in the above anecdote is most probably fictional, it offers a setting that was at least judged by Sulamī to be credible enough for the purpose of boosting Abū 'Amr's authority. It could therefore reflect the *ḥalqa* context about which Sulamī himself would have had direct knowledge as a participant, and from which he obtained his own collection of segments.

References in the *Ṭabaqāt* to teaching circles or sessions (*majlis*, *ḥalqa*)¹⁰⁷ usually do not specify their actual location. In the few exceptions, a mosque, or even the main mosque of a town, is said to have been the location.¹⁰⁸ Shiblī's circle, for example, is said, on one occasion, to have been located in the main mosque of Medina (*kuntu wāqifan 'alā ḥalqat Abī Bakr al-Shiblī fī jāmi' al-Madīna*...).¹⁰⁹ Abū Ḥamza 'l-Baghdādī is also said to have spoken (*takallama*) in the main mosque of Medina, where a change in his mystical state caused him to 'fall from his seat'! (*takallama yawman fī jāmi' al-Madīna fa-taghayyara 'alayh ḥāluh wa-saqata 'an kursiyyih*).¹¹⁰ Although the suggestions that these individuals held sessions in the same important mosque primarily serve the purpose of boosting their authority, nonetheless they also indicate that the holding of such sessions in mosques, sometimes perhaps even in the most prestigious mosques, was credible in Sulamī's lifetime.

In the Abū 'Amr anecdote mentioned above, the individuals who form the circle are themselves Sufi authorities (*mashā'ikh*); this is necessary for the sake of fulfilling the particular functions of that anecdote (i.e. boosting the status of Abū 'Amr). In other examples, however, the presence of Sufis who were not all eminent shaykhs is implied. There are also indications that such sessions were not closed to outsiders. For instance, the transmitter of the segment about Shiblī's session in the main mosque of Medina describes himself as 'an onlooker' (*kuntu wāqifan 'alā ḥalqat Abī Bakr al-Shiblī*). This is perhaps to be expected in the (public) main

mosque. Other indications of the openness of meetings can be found, as for example in the statement that Shiblī himself started out on the Sufi path at one of Khayr al-Nassāj's sessions (*tāba fī majlis Khayr al-Nassāj*).¹¹¹

Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* also contains a relatively small proportion of segments with *isnāds* indicating written transmission. The most common formula for this purpose is *ra'aytu bi-khaṭṭ al-fulān* (I saw in the handwriting of X).¹¹² For example, written transmission from both Sulamī's father and grandfather are indicated in this way, *ra'aytu bi-khaṭṭ abī/ jaddī*.¹¹³ The use of *khaṭṭ* in such formulae specifies that the written source is in the handwriting of its author, thus adding more weight to its credibility, as the following introduction to a segment emphasises: *wajadtu fī kitāb jaddī Abī 'Uthmān, bi-khaṭṭ yadih* ... (I found, in 'the book' of my grandfather, Abū 'Uthmān, in his handwriting ...).¹¹⁴

The following link in an *isnād* is also instructive: *sami'tu Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Kafarshilā'i qāla wajadtu fī kitābī 'an Ḥātim al-Aṣamm* ... (I heard Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Kafarshilā'i say, I found [it] in my *kitāb*, on the authority of Ḥātim al-Aṣamm ...).¹¹⁵ It seems to imply that Kafarshilā'i was unfamiliar with the contents of his own *kitāb*, so that it is unlikely that it could possibly be referring to a literary work that he had compiled. Since he simply came across the segment in his *kitāb*, it is perhaps more likely that the *kitāb* is instead a reference to a collection of such segments, possibly in the form of a notebook that could have been used to record segments as an aid to memory.¹¹⁶

There are also a few *isnāds* that indicate transmission by means of licence to transmit (*ijāzatan*). For instance, the first and second segments of the body of the biography of Muḥammad b. Khafīf are introduced using the formula *akhbaranā Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Khafīf ijāzatan*,¹¹⁷ whilst the following remark is found at the end of this biography: *kull ḥādhihi 'l-ḥikāyāt akhbaranihā Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Khafīf raḥimah Allāh ijāzatan lī bi-khaṭṭih* (Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Khafīf, may God have mercy on him, informed me about all of these [preceding] segments by licence, in his own handwriting).¹¹⁸ This final statement may be a gloss, with the purpose of attributing authority to all of those segments in the biography which precede it, and are introduced merely by the simple conjunction *wa-*; that is, as far back as the aforementioned initial two segments of the biography which possess their own *isnāds*. The remark may nonetheless be significant as an indication

that the written transmission of a group of segments by *ijāza* was a current practice amongst Sufi scholars.

The relatively few indications of written transmission in the *isnāds* of segments in this work may be an indication that the expression of oral transmission was preferred. The specific references to *ijāzas* and 'the handwriting' of those ascribed with written sources are then perhaps a further indication of the dubiousness with which written transmissions may have been perceived. If the *isnād* claims that the source was in the handwriting of the 'author', or transmitted with his blessing, then it could offer reassurance that it is not a corrupted copy made by somebody else, or a second-hand transmission prone to textual adulteration and growth. Sulamī himself suggests that the use of a written source without licence is less credible than the other forms of transmission (both oral and written through licence) which involve some form of direct encounter with the transmitter.¹¹⁹

VIII

Anyone who reads closely an early work of Islamic historiography, such as the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, will soon notice that it contains numerous segments that are variants of each other. It should perhaps be no surprise that variants should have been generated and transmitted, but the fact that they are included in the same literary work demands further consideration. Variants in the *Ṭabaqāt* may be found in the same, as well as in different biographies. That is to say, segments that are variants of each other may be attributed to the same, or to different individuals. The biography of Junayd itself contains the following two variant segments:

- 1 I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī say that he heard Abū 'l-Ṭayyib al-'Akkī say that he heard Ja'far al-Khuldī say that he heard Junayd say, The opening of every honourable door is [achieved by] the exertion of effort (*fath kull bāb sharīf badhl al-majhūd*).

(TABS, 147.4–6)

- 2 I heard 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Bakr say that he heard Hammām b. al-Ḥārith say that he heard Junayd say, The door to every pure and glorious knowledge is the exertion of effort (*bāb kull 'ilm nafīs jalīl badhl al-majhūd*), and the one

who seeks God by the exertion of effort is not like the one who seeks him by the path of liberality (*tarīq al-jūd*).

(TABS, 142.10–143.1)

Each of the above segments is given on the authority of its own specific *isnād*. Having ostensibly been obtained separately, they have both been included as utterances by Junayd. If one assumes that the inclusion of variants in the same biography would have been undesirable, then one might see this case as an oversight. This would also support the aforementioned suggestion that the entry of segments into biographies may have been a collaborative process, rather than checked by a single individual. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that the variants have significant differences, which could have made each of them worthy of inclusion.

Variant 2 is the more elaborate version; it specifies that 'the door' is that of knowledge, and also includes an extra rhyming clause which serves to contrast the method of exerting effort (*badhl al-majhūd*) against that of 'liberality' (*jūd*). Whilst the term *jūd* does not usually have negative connotations,¹²⁰ in this context it is probably being employed polemically, and is presumably directed at a competing path that attaches less importance to personal effort.¹²¹

The existence of these two variants highlights the fact that segments have had their own histories before being entered into the *Ṭabaqāt*, during which they may already have been transformed. In this specific example there are indications that the variants may have been generated as a result of factors, such as the preference for conciseness, greater precision (*bāb kull 'ilm/ kull bāb*), and polemical interests (*badhl al-majhūd/ tarīq al-jūd*).

The biography of Abū Yazīd, which is located in the first generation section, contains a segment that is a close variant of segments found in two other biographies, namely those of Abū Bakr al-Kattānī (fourth generation) and Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Dīnawarī (fifth generation). They thus place variants of the same utterance in the mouths of individuals from three different generations:

- 1 And Abū Yazīd said, God observed the hearts of his saints (*awliyā'ih*), and amongst them were those who were not fit to bear gnosis in a pure form, so he preoccupied them with worship (*man lam yakun yaṣluḥ li-ḥaml al-ma'rifa ṣirfan fa-shaghalahum bi- 'l-'ibāda*).

(TABS, 63.11–13)

- 2 Kattānī said, God looked at some of his worshippers (*'ubaydih*) and did not consider them fit for his gnosis (*ahlan li-ma'rifatih*), so he preoccupied them with his service (*fa-shaghalahum bi-khidmatih*)

(TABS, 391.3-4)

- 3 And I saw in the handwriting of my father¹²² that Abū 'Abbās al-Dīnawarī said, God has worshippers (*'ubbād*) whom he does not consider fit for his gnosis (*lam yastaṣliḥhum li-ma'rifatih*), so he preoccupies them with his service (*fa-shaghalahum bi-khidmatih*), and he also has worshippers whom he does not consider fit for his service, so he disregards them (*lam yastaṣliḥhum li-khidmatih fa-ahmalahum*).

(TABS, 503.7-9)

Each of the above three variant utterances informs of the existence of certain devotees of God (*'ubbād*, *'ubayd*, *awliyā'*) who are not deemed fit for gnosis, and are therefore kept busy (*shaghalā*) by God with alternative preoccupations (*'ibāda*, *khidma*). The implication is that gnosis is reserved for an elite, whilst other devotees are engaged in inferior activities because of their inadequacy. The third example, which also happens to be provided with its own *isnād*, is the most elaborate version; it includes an extra statement at the end, which introduces a new category, even further down the hierarchy – those who are not even deemed fit for God's service, and are therefore disregarded altogether.

The inclusion of variant segments in the same biography, and, perhaps even more so in different biographies as utterances attributed to different individuals, highlights the hazards of treating a work like the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* as a source of historical facts. Since it is unlikely that the compilers themselves were unaware of the existence of such variants in biographical traditions, that it did not seem to cause misgivings implies that the value of biographical material did not lie (merely) in its historicity, but rather the continued relevance of its message.

It has already been noted that many of the utterances attributed to the subject of a biography are presented in a question-answer construct. The questions that are used for this purpose tend to be formulaic, and they can serve to highlight the topics of interest

which were considered worthy of inclusion. For example, the biography of Junayd contains two segments, in which the utterance attributed to him is presented as a response to the question 'Who is the gnostic?' (*man al-ʿārif*).

- 1 Junayd was asked, Who is the gnostic (*man al-ʿārif*)? He replied, One who is not distracted, neither by a glance nor an utterance.

(TABS, 145.6-8)

- 2 On being asked, Who is the gnostic (*man al-ʿārif*), Junayd replied, The one who speaks about your secret while you are silent.

(TABS, 143.9-11)

These two segments offer different, although not mutually exclusive, responses to the same question: The gnostic is not distracted (from God) by what he may see or hear, and he can also read other people's minds. The biography of Abū Yazīd also includes, amongst several utterances about the *ʿārif* and *ma'rifa*, those that are presented as responses to questions, such as 'What is the sign (*ʿalāma*) of the *ʿārif*?';¹²³ 'What are the degrees (*darajāt*) of the *ʿārif*?';¹²⁴ 'For what did they receive *ma'rifa*?';¹²⁵ and 'By means of what did you acquire *ma'rifa*?'.¹²⁶

Returning to the biography of Junayd, it should be mentioned that it contains another instance where two utterances are each presented as responses to the same formulaic question, namely 'Whom should I follow?' (*man aṣḥabu?*). On this occasion the segments are actually juxtaposed:

- 1 Junayd said to a man who asked him, Whom should I follow? The one to whom you are able to reveal what God knows about you (*mā yaʿlamuh Allāh mink*).
2 He was asked another time, Whom should I follow? The one who is able to forget his belongings and carry out what is incumbent on him.

(TABS, 148.9-12)

The first of the above variants attributed to Junayd is particularly significant in relation to the two biographical traditions being considered in this study, because the following variant of it, employing the same conspicuously rare *ʿalima min* verbal construct, is attributed to Abū Yazīd in the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*:

H. A man asked him (Abū Yazīd), Whom should I follow?
He said, The one from whom you do not need to hide what
God knows about you (*mā ya'lamuh Allāh mink*).

(H, X, 38.7-8)

Whilst this is admittedly a unique case with regard to the specific biographical traditions of Abū Yazīd and Junayd, nonetheless it demonstrates that close variant utterances have been attributed in contemporary works even to the two figures who in later tradition came to represent opposite poles of Sufism.¹²⁷ It serves as a further reminder of the pitfalls in treating works of this genre as repositories of facts about individuals belonging to earlier generations, and that they are more likely to represent a 'mirror of the environment' in which they were compiled.¹²⁸

IX

The most recurrent topic in the biographies of both Abū Yazīd and Junayd is gnosis (*ma'rifa*).¹²⁹ The same can also be said for most of the biographies in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*. It suggests that *ma'rifa* was the most popular topic when the work was compiled. Segments about this topic attributed to Sufis of the past were preserved. Nonetheless, the biographical traditions of Abū Yazīd and Junayd appear to have already acquired certain distinctive characteristics. The Abū Yazīd tradition can be distinguished from that of Junayd by the recurrence of comparisons of gnostics with other (implicitly inferior) types of religious devotees, but, as the above variants demonstrate, this kind of utterance is by no means exclusively attributed to Abū Yazīd. The Junayd tradition already includes epistolary segments, which, in common with the utterances attributed to him, frequently employ technical Sufi terminology. Whilst this distinction is perhaps fitting for someone remembered as an erudite Sufi who had widespread authority, these types of segments are neither attributed exclusively to Junayd. Thus, whilst individual segments from each of these biographies would not look out of place if they were filed into an alternative one, the accumulated assemblages as a whole, of which they are component parts, already begin to depict Abū Yazīd and Junayd as examples of distinct types of mystics – the former bold and provocative, the latter erudite and cautious.

Christopher Melchert has recently pointed out that the contents of the biographies of the earliest individuals to be included in the *Ṭabaqāt* are distinct from the others, since they contain a greater emphasis on asceticism and piety than on mysticism and gnosis.¹³⁰ Moreover, Johannes Pedersen had noticed that these biographies are also distinct by virtue of their possession of a higher proportion of *isnāds* that imply written transmission, as well as lengthy narrative segments.¹³¹ All of these characteristics can be interpreted as indications that the biographical traditions of the earliest members – those living the furthest back from Sulamī's own time – had already reached a relatively mature form. The possibility of recreating these established biographical portraits, such as by means of backprojections, was restricted considerably by their familiarity. It is therefore perhaps to be expected that, of all the biographies in the *Ṭabaqāt*, they should be the ones that are distinct from the rest in this regard. Moreover, this distinction hardly represents sufficient grounds for assuming that, if Sulamī did not rework the early biographies significantly himself, then they must be historically accurate. In fact, recent studies by Bonner and Cooperson have already demonstrated that, prior to the eleventh century, the biographies of Ibrāhīm b. Adham and Bishr al-Hāfi (respectively) offer contrastingly different portraits from those in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*. Evidently, by the time of Sulamī's work, these biographical traditions had already reached a relatively mature stage, but only after having previously undergone processes of reworking and development.¹³²

The *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* holds obvious attractions for those who are interested in reconstructing the early history of Sufism. Although this is not the aim of the present study, the examples provided above can serve as a note of caution with regard to treating this work as a repository of facts about the individuals it describes. Whilst one should not deny that there is likely to be a certain amount of historically accurate information amongst the biographical segments that make up Sulamī's portraits, it should be pointed out that it was precisely on account of their continued relevance in the judgement of later generations that they had been preserved and transmitted (whilst presumably an indeterminable amount of other segments would conversely have been lost in the process). Moreover, it is difficult to identify precisely the 'authentic' segments with any degree of certainty, and even if some of them might have been preserved in their original form

they are likely now to convey different messages, as shaped by the new contexts in which they have been embedded. Given that the authors of *ṭabaqāt* works did not necessarily share the same aims as modern historians, it is perhaps safer to appreciate their functions in their present contexts than to speculate about their accuracy in describing earlier historical periods.

There are a number of ways in which biographical segments about past Sufis could have been relevant for a contemporary audience or readership. For instance, they could serve as models of ideal belief and conduct, for the purpose of emulation. In this way, they could shape the definition of Sufism for the contemporary community by whom they were used. Polemical segments, such as the *ikhtilāf al-ʿulamāʾ* utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd and the written correspondence attributed to Junayd, which is aimed against hypocritical teachers, lend themselves most obviously to this function.¹³³

Furthermore, biographical segments also serve to delight the listener/reader. For instance, the aforementioned verse attributed to Junayd serves to reinforce, in an enjoyable and memorable manner, the message of the matter-of-fact utterance which precedes it.¹³⁴ The following pithy utterances attributed to Abū Yazīd, which represent a common type of segment found in Sulamī's biographies, also seem to be designed to give pleasure and to stimulate reflection on lofty issues: *kufī ahl al-himma aslam min imān ahl al-minna* (The unbelief of those with aspiration is sounder than the faith of those who seek rewards!);¹³⁵ *abʿad al-khalq min Allāh aktharuhum ishāratān ilayh* (The furthest from God amongst mankind are the ones who point to him the most!).¹³⁶

In the preceding sections of this chapter, reference has been made to the occasional incongruities in the overall framework of the *Ṭabaqāt*, as well as the 'unsystematic' order of its biographical segments. In spite of this, however, and especially in view of the fact that its overall framework is predominantly unified and systematic, it would seem justified to classify the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* as a work which bears the stamp of the authorial control of Sulamī. (This should become all the more clear when its occasional incongruities are compared with the large number evident in the other eleventh century Sufi *ṭabaqāt* works, which constitute the subjects of the next two chapters of this study).

In fact, the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* merits being counted as Sulamī's most important work, since, by virtue of its position as the earliest

example of its genre, it came to acquire a symbolic authority amongst later Sufis.¹³⁷ Thus, its importance lies in how it was perceived, regardless of its historical accuracy. Its unrivalled influence on later works of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre is two-fold: in the first place, its clearly defined organisational framework has influenced the main examples of the genre; and secondly, the form and content of its biographies have determined the parameters for the later development of individual biographical traditions, which continued to accumulate material to supplement that which was derived from Sulamī's own portraits. In these ways, Sulamī's eleventh century re-reading of the past of Sufism, in the form of the first work of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre, shaped the corresponding re-readings of his successors in Sufi historiography. The influence that it has exerted on later *ṭabaqāt* writings is illustrated especially in Chapters Three and Four of the present study. However, attention will be drawn first of all to a work of the same genre which is traditionally ascribed to a contemporary of Sulamī, namely Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī.

The *Hilyat al-awliyā'*

I

Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), the assumed author of the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, is remembered primarily as a Shafi'ite hadith transmitter. Subkī mentions that about eighty people transmitted hadiths from him.¹ Later tradition reinforces Abū Nu'aym's Shafi'ite credentials by associating him with Shafi'ite/Hanbalite rivalries in his home town; he is even attributed with the miracle of causing the mosque of Isfahan to collapse and crush its congregation, in response to being expelled on account of his loyalty to Shafi'ism.²

Whilst Abū Nu'aym himself is not remembered as an important past authority in the later Sufi biographical tradition, his grandfather (Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf) Ibn Ma'dān al-Bannā', is identified as the teacher of 'Alī b. Sahl al-Iṣfahānī (d.307/920), who was the most celebrated Sufi from Isfahan.³ In the introduction to the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, Ibn Ma'dān is mentioned as Abū Nu'aym's forerunner in Sufi scholarship.⁴ Moreover the *Hilya* closes with the biographies of recent generations of Ibn Ma'dān's students.⁵ This would suggest that the main influence on Abū Nu'aym in the direction of Sufism was the memory of his grandfather, and association with his successors in Isfahan.

The ten-volume *ṭabaqāt* work, the *Hilyat al-awliyā' wa-ṭabaqāt al-asfiyā'*, is the longest work ascribed to Abū Nu'aym by a considerable margin. The other major works ascribed to him, namely the *Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān* and the *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, also display an interest in biographies and hadith transmissions.⁶

II

The *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, which is introduced as a Sufi *ṭabaqāt* work,⁷ consists of approximately 650 biographies, amounting to ten volumes in the printed edition (approx. 4, 000 pages). Although it does not have a clearly-defined organisational framework comparable with Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, a general chronological principle is evident in the order of biographies, since they begin with the four 'rightly-guided' Caliphs (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*) and culminate with Abū Nu'aym's contemporaries.⁸ The time-span is covered predominantly by individuals who are not usually identified as Sufis; these include the generations of the *salaf*, the first six Imams of Shi'ism, scholastic theologians, the founders of major law schools and other celebrated pietists. These religious authorities are attributed with some Sufi utterances (amongst other material) in their respective biographies, even though they may not usually be remembered in this way.⁹ Their inclusion can be attributed to Abū Nu'aym's own interests in scholasticism and traditionalism.

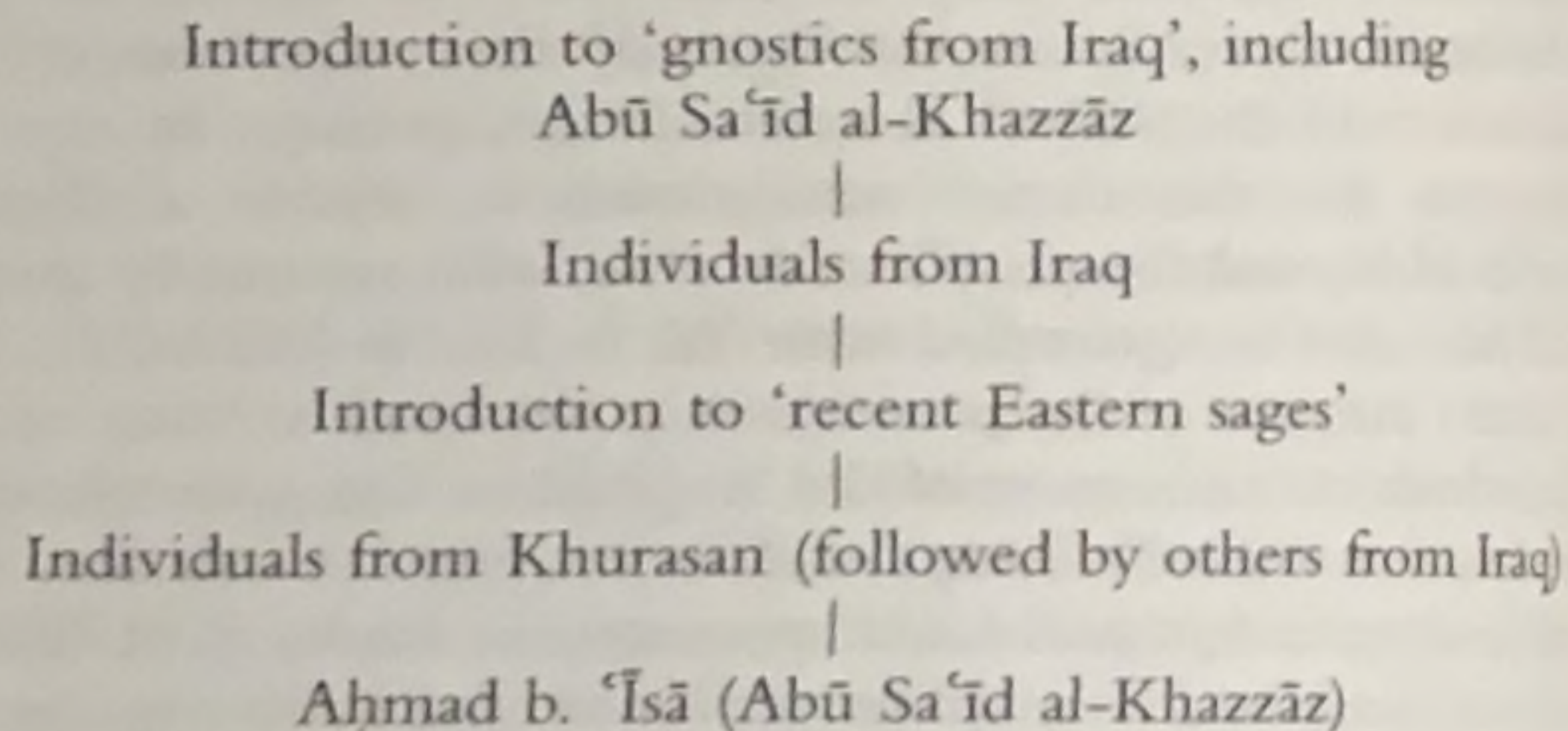
Whilst the overall arrangement of the biographies in the *Hilya* is chronological, the individual biographies do not follow in a strict chronological order. Even though the dates of the deaths of the subjects of biographies are seldom offered, there are a number of glaring inconsistencies, such as when a student's biography is presented many volumes before that of his own teacher.¹⁰ The reason for such discrepancies appears to be the application of a number of competing organisational principles without sufficient coordination. In addition to the chronological principle (and often in conflict with it), biographies can be found juxtaposed because of the geographical origins of their subjects,¹¹ the relationships between their subjects,¹² and the associations between their contents (e.g. common theme, motif, key-word).¹³ The conflict between these competing principles of order suggests that they may not have been applied by a single author. This is further corroborated by the number of instances where two separate biographies are provided about the same individual, which even overlap in content.¹⁴ Therefore, although the overall chronological progression of the biographies is clear and comparable with other works of the *ṭabaqāt* genre, in that it structures a continuity from an authoritative point in the past to the generation immediately preceding the assumed author, a closer inspection reveals a relatively large amount of inconsistencies, suggesting the work of 'many hands'.¹⁵

The *Hilya* includes, amongst its approximately 650 biographies, 76 out of the 103 that make up Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*. Most of them (68) are found in the tenth volume.¹⁶ In view of the fact that the biographies which correspond to Sulamī's collection constitute only a small proportion (approximately a ninth) of the total number in the *Hilya*, its omissions may be more significant. The longest biography in the *Ṭabaqāt* for which there is no counterpart in the *Hilya* is that of al-Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj. It seems remarkable that Ḥallāj should not be included in a work of this scope and volume. It may be that he was considered too controversial, especially in the light of the comments in the introduction of the *Hilya*.¹⁷ Later tradition, perhaps by way of explanation for this conspicuous omission, reports a dispute between Ḥallāj and the people of Isfahan, who apparently sought to kill him after he quarrelled with 'Alī b. Sahl al-Iṣfahānī.¹⁸

For the purpose of the present study, the tenth volume of the *Hilya*, which contains most of the biographies that correspond to those found in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, will be the focus of attention. On initial investigation, this volume appears to be made up of distinct groups of juxtaposed biographies, each preceded by its own 'group introduction'.¹⁹ The 'group introduction' ostensibly explains the reason why biographies belonging to the same particular group are juxtaposed. Each is given under the rubric *qāla 'l-shaykh Abū Nu'aym* (or variants of this), suggesting ostensibly that they represent the comments of Abū Nu'aym himself, as recorded by a student. For example, at the end of the biography of Abū Yazīd there is an introduction to 'the suns of the East and their eminent members' (*qāla 'l-shaykh Abū Nu'aym raḥimah Allāh ammiā shumūs ahl al-mashriq wa-a'lāmuhum fa-...*);²⁰ the subsequent six biographies are appropriately about Khurasanian Sufis. However, it should also be pointed out that they are in turn followed by biographies of Sufis from Baghdad, such as Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and Sarī 'l-Saqāṭī, without a further introduction to signal the start of a group of Baghadians. This suggests that the group introductions do not represent the original framework of the *Hilya*, for they are not provided consistently throughout the tenth volume, not to mention the remainder of the work.²¹

Another group introduction in the tenth volume names Abū Sa'īd al-Khazzāz (usually *Kharrāz*), specifically as a member of the group of gnostics from Iraq whose biographies will follow (*qāla 'l-shaykh dhikr jamā'a min jamahīr al-'arīfīn min al-'Irāqiyyīn ... ka-*

Abī Sa'īd al-Khazzāz).²² This introduction is followed, appropriately enough, by the biographies of five Sufis from Iraq. However the biography of Khazzāz himself is found only much later (introduced under his 'ism Aḥmad b. 'Īsā), after several intervening biographies of individuals from Khurasan.²³ The first of these Khurasanian biographies begins with a group introduction to 'a group of recent sages from the East' (*qāla 'l-shaykh wa-min ḥukamā' al-mashriq min al-muta'akhkhirīn jamā'a minhum ...*).²⁴ Thus the following sequence is observed:



The separation between the biography of Khazzāz and the preceding reference to it in a group introduction is probably due to interpolation and growth in the text. Biographies about 'recent Eastern sages' may have been interpolated between his biography and those of the other 'gnostics from Iraq', eventually generating their own group introduction. This would imply that the group introductions represent later redactional efforts to explain the order of biographies in the work, rather than definitive signposts belonging to an original plan. They cannot therefore be relied upon at face value to account for the position of each biography in the tenth volume, since they represent layers of redaction rather than a static compilation under the control of an individual author.²⁵

III

The biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd are both found in the tenth volume of the *Hilya*. Each of them is considerably longer than its counterpart in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*. In the printed edition, the

biography of Junayd is approximately 800 lines in total length, making it the second-longest in the tenth volume (after that of Muḥāsibī), whilst the biography of Abū Yazīd is approximately 200 lines long. Despite the difference in length between these two biographies, both of them, in common with the vast majority of biographies in the *Hilya*, consist of three distinct parts, which correspond to those of the biographies in Sulamī's work.²⁶ However, these parts are invariably found in the alternative order of the introduction, followed by the body, and finally the hadith transmission.²⁷

Similar to the bodies of the biographies in Sulamī's work, the body of each biography in the *Hilya* is made up of juxtaposed discrete segments, which are introduced by one of a number of different types of introductions. Most segments in the biographies of both Abū Yazīd and Junayd are introduced by their own *isnād*.²⁸ However, out of those segments that do not possess an *isnād*, more than twice as many are introduced by a simple conjunction (*wa-/fa-*), rather than a phrase that re-introduces a narrator (*qāla wa-*, the subject being possibly Abū Nu'aym or a transmitter in a preceding *isnād*). Therefore, as in the case of Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, a significant proportion of the segments are presented without being linked unambiguously to a preceding *isnād*.

The modern edition of the *Hilya* employs a method of paragraphing which implies that all of the segments without an *isnād*, regardless of which alternative type of introduction they possess, are given on the authority of the nearest *isnād* that precedes them. This is achieved by paragraphing at the point of each *isnād*. However, just as it has been observed in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, there is no secure basis in the text itself for this convenient interpretation.²⁹

A passage from the body of the biography of Abū Yazīd is presented below to illustrate the segmental form of the text:

- 1 I heard al-Faḍl b. Ja'far say that he heard Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr say that 'Ubayd b. 'Abd al-Qāhir said, A group of people sat around Abū Yazīd (*jalasa qawm ilā Abī Yazīd*). He hung his head down for a while, then he raised it to them and said, While you have been sitting down before me, here I have been, roaming my thoughts, looking for a rotten grain which you can bear, to extract it for you, but I did not find [anything].³⁰

- 2 He said, Abū Yazīd said, I was absent from God for thirty years. My absence from him was [as a result of] my mentioning him (*dhikrī*), for when I refrained from it I found him in every state.³¹
- 3 A man said to me,³² Why do you not travel? [Abū Yazīd] said, Because my companion does not travel and I am staying with him. The questioner opposed him by means of an analogy, saying, Ablution with still water is disliked. Abū Yazīd responded, They did not see any fault with sea water; its water is clean and its dead things are permissible!³³ Then [Abū Yazīd] said, You may see the rivers flowing with droning and murmuring until they approach the sea. When they mix with it their murmuring and turbulence subsides, and the sea water does not notice them, neither does an increase appear in it, nor would a decrease appear in it if they were to leave it.
- 4 'Umar b. Aḥmad related to me that 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad related to him that Aḥmad b. Muḥammad related to him that 'Uthmān related to him on the authority of Abū Mūsā, saying that Abū Yazīd said, I did not cease (*lam azal*) for thirty years, whenever I wished to mention (*adhkur*) God, to rinse and wash my tongue, deeming him too high (*ijlālan li-'llāh*) to mention him.
- 5a 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad al-'Uthmānī related to me that Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Rāzī said that he heard Yūsuf b. al-Ḥusayn say that he heard Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh say that he heard Abū Yazīd al-Baṣṭāmī say, I did not cease (*lam azal*) to wander in the field of unity (*maydān al-tawḥīd*) until I departed to the enclosure of unicity (*dār al-tafrīd*). Then I did not cease (*lam azal*) to wander inside the realm of unicity until I departed to everlastingness (*daymūmiyya*), and I drank from his cup such a drink that, thanks to its memory (*min dhikrīh*), I will certainly not thirst ever again.
- 5b Yūsuf said, I used to hear this speech in different words from Dhū 'l-Nūn, there being an addition to it; Dhū 'l-Nūn would not utter it except when excited (*nashāt*) and overwhelmed by his state (*ghalabat ḥāluh 'alayh*). He used to say that, and follow it with, Yours is the glory and beauty, yours is the perfection. Glory be to you, glory be

to you. May the tongues of praises and the mouths of glorification venerate you. You, you, eternal, eternal. His love for me is eternal.

6. Abū 'l-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Abī 'Imrān related to me that Mūsā related to him that Maṣṣūr b. 'Abdullāh related to him, saying that he heard Abū 'Imrān Mūsā b. 'Isā say that he heard his father say that Abū Yazīd said, I was absent from God for thirty years. My absence from him was [a result of] my mentioning him, for when I refrained from it I found him in every state, until it was as if he was me (*hattā ka-annah anā*).³⁴

(H, X, 34.18–35.17)

The above passage can be divided into six discrete segments, as shown. Segments 2 and 3 are the only ones without an *isnād*, being introduced by *qāla wa-* and *wa-*, respectively. These juxtaposed segments also appear to have a thematic association with each other; the utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd in Segment 2 implies that refraining from the activity of mentioning God (*dhikr*) had overcome absence from him, whilst the utterance in Segment 3 asserts that refraining from the activity of travel is preferable with regards to achieving proximity to God. The thematic association between the two utterances seems to have caused the use of an inappropriate pronoun at the beginning of Segment 3 (*lī* instead of *lah*); it is most likely a scribal error due to the force of the utterance in Segment 2, which immediately precedes it.³⁵ That is to say, Segment 3 may in fact have been interpreted as a continuation of the direct speech of Abū Yazīd in Segment 2, and, as a consequence, the pronoun may have been changed (short-sightedly) to the first person in order to facilitate assimilation.

Segments 2 and 6 in the above passage are close variants. Their wording is almost identical, the only significant difference being the extra phrase at the end of Segment 6 (*ka-annah anā*, 'as if he was me'), describing the perception of identity between the speaker (Abū Yazīd) and God. There is an allusion to such an experience also in the allegory which forms Abū Yazīd's final response in Segment 3 (... and the sea water does not notice them, nor does there appear in it an increase, nor would there appear a decrease in it if they were to leave it). One might therefore have anticipated the juxtaposition of Segments 3 and 6, on account of this particular association.

The segments that separate Segments 3 and 6 do not appear to do so merely by coincidence, or as a result of haphazard ordering, since patterns of association are also discernible between them. Segment 4 depicts Abū Yazīd as declaring his persistence (for thirty years again) in the pious habit of washing his tongue out whenever he wanted to mention God's name. It is perhaps associated with Segment 2 through the key-word *dhikr*.

Segment 5 can be divided into two parts, the second part being introduced with a reference back to the first part by its introduction (*kuntu asma'u hādhā 'l-kalām*). The first part (5a) consists of an utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd, describing his progression towards ever closer proximity to God (*maydān, dār*), and implying the eventual attainment of some form of union and permanence (*tawhīd, tafīd, daymūmiyya*). He reaches a climax where he drinks such a drink (*shurba*) from 'God's cup' (*kar'nah*) that he will never thirst again, simply because of the memory (*dhikr*) he retains of it. This is clearly related to the other segments in the passage which tell of a climactic experience of union. Segment 5a is also associated with Segment 4 by the repeated use of the phrase *lam yazal*, with which both of these segments begin. This is unlikely to be merely a coincidence, for no other segment in the entire biography begins with the same construct.³⁶

The above analysis demonstrates thematic and key-word/phrase associations between juxtaposed segments, with or without *isnād*. Each segment qualifies by association, in some measure, to be included in its position, suggesting that their juxtaposition is not coincidental. However, in comparison, Segments 2, 3 and 6 are the most closely related. The first two of these are juxtaposed, and seem to have been considered as a continuous segment by at least one scribe. However, Segment 6 is separated from them by two segments, which themselves are not unrelated to their neighbours. The separation may be due to the interpolation of these segments (4 and 5), which are also, albeit to a lesser degree, associated with Segments 2 and 3, as well as with each other. It may also be the case that the two variants (Segments 2 and 6) were added to the text at different times, the interpolator of the later one to be added, being either unaware, or unconcerned, that a variant had already been included. In any case, this representative passage seems to have been produced by layers of entries of segments, rather than a static compilation prepared at one time by a single individual. In this way, it corresponds to the 'multi-layered' organisational framework of the *Hilya*.

The inclusion of Segment 5b, which informs of the existence of a variant of Segment 5a, but attributed to Dhū 'l-Nūn, is worthy of consideration. It seems to function not merely to inform of a variant, but also thereby to provide support for the validity of the utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd, by attributing a variant of it to a more authoritative individual. The provision of this kind of corroboration occurs once again in his biography (in the hadith transmission).³⁷ However, other segments that appear equally, if not more, in need of this kind of corroboration also are included in the biography without any such corroboration.³⁸ This is perhaps yet another indication of inconsistency in the compilation, reinforcing the impression of it as a product of 'many hands'.

IV

The passage from the biography of Abū Yazīd which is presented above, at the beginning of Section III, includes two variants of the same utterance (Segments 2 and 6), both of which are attributed to Abū Yazīd, as well as a variant of a different utterance which is attributed to Dhū 'l-Nūn (Segment 5b).³⁹ The biography of Junayd also contains a number of such variants, and they can be identified amongst its narrative segments as well as its utterance segments.⁴⁰

The passage presented above in Section III contains examples of the two main categories into which all the segments in the body of the biography of Abū Yazīd can be classified: utterances (Segments 2, 4, 5, 6) and narratives (Segments 1, 3).⁴¹ These are the same two categories of segments that are offered in the corresponding biography of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*. The biography of Junayd, on the other hand, contains additional categories of segments, such as epistolary and verse segments.⁴²

Amongst the utterances attributed to Junayd in the *Hilya* are three examples of a form of utterance that is not represented at all in its earlier counterpart, namely 'lengthy prayers'.⁴³ Whilst the latter differ from the short prayers found in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* because of their length (20–71 lines), they consist of a series of the same forms of exclamations in praise of God and appeals to God for help (e.g. *Ilāhī laysa fī ufuq samawātik wa-lā fī qarār ardīk fī fushāt aqālīmihā man yuhibb an yahmada ghayrak . . .* 'God, there is not in the horizon of your heavens, nor on the firmness of your earth, in

the vastness of its climes, anyone who wants to praise something other than you ...).⁴⁴ The lengthy prayers in this biography are each introduced as having been recited aloud by Junayd (*ṣam'itū 'l-Junayd b. Muḥammad yaqūl wa-huwa yad'ū bi-hādhā 'l-du'ā*).⁴⁵ In one case, a man comes to him to complain about depression, as a response to which Junayd teaches him the prayer (*fa-jā'ah rajul ji-shakā ilayh al-ḍayq fa-'allamah wa-qāla qul..*).⁴⁶ This comment suggests an explanation for the recording and preservation of prayers such as these; the prayers attributed to an illustrious Sufi, like Junayd, may have been recorded in writing, memorised and used in one's own personal worship. This factor could also have influenced the development of lengthy, elaborate and poetic prayers.

Fifteen of the segments in the body of the biography of Junayd are epistolary.⁴⁷ They possess the same characteristics as the sole example of this category presented in Sulamī's biography of Junayd, which, in fact, is also amongst those included here in the *Hilya*;⁴⁸ they are made up of rhyming balanced clauses, and they offer advice and instruction. Since their average length is twenty-five lines, when combined they account for almost half of the total length of the biography.⁴⁹ Three of them are juxtaposed, covering a total of approximately 100 lines between them.⁵⁰ This conspicuous series of segments suggests that juxtaposition according to segment-category may have been a further organising principle that was applied during the development of the text. (They may also have been stored or transmitted together before compilation, despite their conflicting *isnāds*).

Fourteen of the segments in this biography are narratives. Included amongst them are autobiographical narratives about encounters between Junayd and each of his named teachers, namely Hārith al-Muḥāsibī and Sarī 'l-Saqatī.⁵¹ They offer descriptions of contrasting student-teacher relationships. In the first of the two juxtaposed narratives, which form the following continuous passage, Junayd is depicted favourably in relation to Saqatī, who was also his maternal uncle:

- 1 Ja'far b. Muḥammad informed us in something that he wrote⁵² and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm related to me, saying that he heard Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd b. Muḥammad say, One day I entered before Sarī 'l-Saqatī and saw that he was unsettled. I said, Shaykh, I see you are unsettled. He said,

Just now there was a knock on my door and I said, Enter. A youth (*shābb*), who looked like he was about the right age for discipleship, entered before me and asked me about the meaning of *tawba* (repentance), so I informed him. He then asked me about the condition of *tawba* so I told him. Then he said, That is the meaning of *tawba* and this is its condition, so what is its essence (*ḥaqīqa*)? I said, The essence of repentance for you is that you do not forget the reason for repentance. He said, It is not like that for us. So I asked him, What is the essence of repentance for you then? He said, The essence of repentance is that you do not remember the reason for repentance. I am now contemplating his words. Junayd said, I then responded, How beautiful are his words! Then [Saqatī] said to me, Junayd, what is the meaning of this? I said, Teacher (*ustādh*), if I am with you in the state of harshness (*ḥāl al-jafā'*) and you transfer me from that state to the state of purity (*ḥāl al-ṣafā'*) then my remembrance of harshness whilst being in this state of purity would be negligence.

- 2 I entered before him on another day (*yawman ākhir*) and saw him unsettled, so I said, Shaykh, I notice that you are anxious. He said, Yesterday I was in the main mosque (*jāmi'*) when a youth (*shābb*) stopped before me and said to me, Shaykh the slave does know that God has accepted him! I said, He does not know. He said, Oh yes he does. And he said once again, Oh yes he does. I said to him, How does he know? He said, If I see that God has held me back from every act of disobedience (*ma'ṣiya*) and made me conform to every act of obedience (*tā'a*), then I know that God has accepted me.

(H, X, 274, 9–15)

The two similar narratives, which form the above passage, are linked together by the phrase 'on another day' (*yawman ākhir*). They are therefore not presented as discrete segments, although they appear to be variants of each other, but rather as a continuous narration by Junayd. The first narrative (1) serves to depict Junayd as a precocious student who appreciates and explains cleverly the wisdom of the youth (*shābb*)⁵³ to his own teacher (*shaykh*, *ustādh*), Saqatī. The reader may anticipate a similar evaluation of the answer of the youth by Junayd in the second narrative, but none is given.

The latter does not therefore function to attribute directly any positive qualities to Junayd himself. However, it again describes Saqāṭī as being outsmarted by a youth, and the juxtaposition influences the reader to associate Junayd once again with the latter, in preference to his own teacher. These narratives therefore depict Junayd as being wiser than Saqāṭī by means of the third character of the *shābb*, thereby conveniently avoiding any suggestion of conflict between the pair themselves.

It may be the case that the narratives in the above passage are polemical in origin, with the aim of denigrating Saqāṭī, for he does not himself recognise the wisdom of the youth in either of them. In view of that, it is perhaps no coincidence that Muḥāsibī is portrayed positively in all of the segments about him in this biography.

The following pair of autobiographical narratives about Junayd's encounters with Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī parallel in a number of ways the above pair involving Saqāṭī:

- 1 I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Miqṣam say that he heard Abū Bakr al-Khawwāṣ say that he heard al-Junayd b. Muḥammad say, Al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī used to come to our house and say, Come out for a stroll with me. I would say to him, You [want to] take me away from my seclusion and security against my carnal soul (*nafs*) to the streets, the realm of wretchedness and lustful sights! He would say, Come out with me and don't be scared! So I would go out with him, and it would be as if the street were empty of everything – we would not see anything to dislike!

(H, X, 255.18–22)

- 2 I used to say often to Ḥārith, [What about] my seclusion and my intimacy? You [want to] take me out to the vileness of the vision of the people and the streets! He would say to me, How often will you say, [What about] my intimacy and my seclusion? If half of mankind were to approach me I would not find any intimacy with them, and if the other half kept away from me I would not feel lonely because of their distance!

(H, X, 255.25–256.3)

The above variants are both narrated autobiographically, and in the past continuous tense; these encounters are being related as habitual occurrences, rather than specific events. They are separated from each other by only one intervening segment, which itself is also an autobiographical narrative in the past continuous tense about Junayd's experiences with Muḥāsibī.⁵⁴ This suggests that they were juxtaposed because all three are segments of the same type.

In both of the above variants Junayd describes his complaints to Muḥāsibī for urging him out of his seclusion. In Variant 1, Junayd discovers the correctness of Muḥāsibī's approach by experiencing (perhaps miraculously) that his fear of distraction by the 'wretchedness and lustful sights' (*āfāt, ru'yat al-shahawāt*) was unwarranted, whilst in Variant 2, Muḥāsibī rebukes him for his fear, declaring that he himself is not affected by exposure to mankind. They both function to demonstrate the latter's superior wisdom, and are therefore perhaps unlikely selections for the biography of Junayd, who is portrayed as someone with still a lot to learn.⁵⁵ Their portrayal of Muḥāsibī in relation to Junayd contrasts sharply with the aforementioned autobiographical narratives about Junayd's encounters with Saqāṭī, his other named teacher. Both pairs of segments may be part of the same polemical effort to promote the authority of Muḥāsibī.

The other narrative segments in the biography of Junayd include the following two variant segments, which each narrate an encounter with Abū Bakr al-Shiblī, who is often listed as one of Junayd's students:⁵⁶

- 1 Ja'far informed us and 'Uthman also told me about it, saying, I was walking with Junayd when Shiblī met him and said to him, Abū 'l-Qāsim, what do you have to say about someone for whom God (*al-ḥaqq*) suffices as attribute (*na'ī*), knowledge (*'ilm*) and existence (*wujūd*)? He responded, Abū Bakr, divinity is lofty and lordship is mighty; there are a thousand levels between the eminent of the generation and you, at the first level of which one's identity disappears.

(H, X, 267.4–7)

- 2 He said, Shiblī stopped before [Junayd] and said, What do you have to say, Abū 'l-Qāsim, about someone whose existence (*wujūd*) is a truth (*ḥaqīqa*), and not [merely] in

theory (*'ilman*)? He responded, Abū Bakr, between the eminent people and you are seventy steps, the lowest of which is that you forget yourself.

(H, X, 270.19-21)

Each of these variants describes Shiblī confronting Junayd with a question which is implicitly boastful. He is rebuffed by the latter in both cases. The questions posed by Shiblī in the two variants are formed using similar vocabulary (*yā Abā 'l-Qāsim mā taqūl fī mā... , wujūd.. haqq/haqīqa.. 'ilm*). The rebuttals are even more alike. This is probably not merely a coincidence, but rather on account of a shared history.

Narratives of this type describing encounters between two Sufis, one of whom is boastful whilst the other rebuffs his claims, are far from uncommon. Even the biography of Abū Yazīd contains an example (presented below), despite the fact that his own biographical tradition itself contains numerous examples of his own boasts.

I heard Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn say that he heard Maṣṣūr say that he heard Abū Ya'qūb al-Nahrajūrī say that he heard 'Alī b. 'Ubayd al-Sahmdānī say that Yahyā b. Mu'ādh wrote to Abū Yazīd, I became intoxicated (*sakartu*) by the volume that I drank from the cup of his love (*ka's mahabbatih*). Abū Yazīd wrote to him in his reply, You became intoxicated and what you drank were mere drops! [Meanwhile] someone else (*ghayr*)⁵⁷ has drunk the oceans of the heavens and the earth and his thirst has still not been quenched; his tongue is hanging down from thirst and he is asking, Is there any more?

(H, X, 40.10-14)

Although this narrative may differ ostensibly from the variants describing encounters between Junayd and Shiblī, it is actually parallel to them; they each describe the subject of the biography (Abū Yazīd / Junayd) as responding dismissively to the boasts of another Sufi (Ibn Mu'ādh / Shiblī), by suggesting that the latter has not reached the high level that he claims. They appear to be anecdotal topoi, with the function of affirming the discerning authority of their subjects.⁵⁸ In other words, our examples function to attribute to Abū Yazīd and Junayd respectively, the knowledge that is required for discrimination between genuine experiences and the claims of pretenders.

There are two narratives in the biography of Junayd, each of which describes the manner of his death. They give alternative accounts, even though both are presented as eye-witness reports.

- 1 I heard Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn say that he heard Abū 'Abdullāh al-Dārimī say that he heard Abū Bakr al-'Aṭawī say, I was with Junayd when he died; he recited the whole of the Qur'an, then, starting from *Sūrat al-Baqara*, he recited seventy verses and died.

(H, X, 264.1-3)

- 2 I heard 'Abd al-Mun'im b. 'Umar say that he heard Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī say that he heard Abū Bakr al-'Aṭṭār say, I was present with Junayd, Abū 'l-Qāsim, on his death, amongst a group of our companions. He said, [Junayd] was praying whilst sitting and he would bend his legs when he wanted to prostrate himself. He continued like this until the life went out of them. It became difficult for him to move his legs, so he stretched them out. One of his friends amongst those who were present at that time - he was called 'al-Bassāmī' - saw him [in that condition]. Abū 'l-Qāsim's legs had swollen, so he asked, Abū 'l-Qāsim, what is this? He replied, These are God's blessings, God is the greatest. When he completed his prayer, Abū Muḥammad Jurayrī said to him, Abū 'l-Qāsim, if only you would lie down. So he responded, Abū Muḥammad, this is the time of God's kindness. God is the greatest.⁵⁹ That remained his state until he died.

(H, X, 281.11-18)

These different accounts of the same event underline the hazards in using biographical segments as sources for historical events. Although it is known in this case that the event in question (the death of Junayd) must have happened in some fashion, and both of the segments that report it seem plausible, there is no reason to accept one over the other. However, at the same time, it is apparent that both versions have the same function, namely the attribution of a pious death to Junayd. This is perhaps where their significance lies: their function, rather than their historicity. Neither of them can be accepted as a historical account, but each of them serves to attribute a pious death to Junayd, who is portrayed as persevering with acts of worship until the final moments of his life.

Version 2, quoted above, which is appropriately the final segment of the body before the hadith transmission, is more complex than its rival account. Whereas Version 1 is a brief report of a pious death, after reciting the Qur'an, Version 2, by offering details about Junayd's swollen legs, emphasises his persistence in pious worship, despite the obstacles one might expect on the brink of death. It also names three people present when Junayd died: Abū Bakr al-ʿAṭṭār (the narrator), 'al-Bassāmī' and Jurayrī. Only the latter, Jurayrī, is remembered in other sources as a close associate of Junayd; he is in fact described as Junayd's successor.⁶⁰ To my knowledge, the only individual with a name similar to 'al-Bassāmī', who is associated with Junayd in tradition, is actually Abū Yazīd. Could it be a misspelling of his *nisba*? Abū Yazīd, however, is associated with Junayd only by virtue of the latter's commentaries on his utterances,⁶¹ and, in any case, he is believed to have died at least twenty-six years before him. Could the provision of this name perhaps be an error then, made in the attempt to name individuals associated with Junayd as being witnesses to his death? The closest I have found to an 'Abū Bakr al-ʿAṭṭār' who is associated with Junayd is the narrator of our Version 1 [of his death], 'Abū Bakr al-ʿAṭawī'. Could it be that someone with such a name was commonly remembered as having been present at Junayd's death, thus generating the inclusion of these names in each narrative's account?

The *Hilya* has long been regarded by historians as a rich source of narratives, since it usually contains a far greater quantity for each biography than other contemporary works, not to mention the fact that it contains many biographies that are simply not found elsewhere before the eleventh century. However, rather than assuming that it can serve as a source of neutral data for historical reconstruction, it is worthwhile to take advantage of the length of the work to observe such factors as the frequency of variants and anecdotal topoi, as well as the logistical problems posed by the existence of competing accounts of the same event. It would be short-sighted to assume that the contents of these biographies constitute an accurate reflection of historical reality, and, more significantly, it would encourage a superficial interpretation of biographical works, one which would fail to do justice to the dynamic traditions that produced them.

V

The introductions of the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd are typical of such introductions in the *Hilya*. The former is presented below as a representative example:

The shaykh and hafiz, Abū Nuʿaym, may God have mercy upon him, said (*qāla 'l-shaykh al-hāfiz . . .*), Amongst them is the lone roamer, the solitary wanderer (*tā'ih waḥīd, hā'im farīd*), al-Basāmī Abū Yazīd. He roamed and withdrew, he wandered and then returned. He withdrew beyond the limits (*mahdūdāt*) to the originator of perceptibles (*maḥsūsāt*) and non-existents (*ma'dūmāt*). He separated himself from creation. He was consistent with the truth. He was helped by secret retreats, and reinforced by the mastering of piety. His allusions are plain and his expressions hidden; to those who understand them they give security, to those who reject them they are a temptation (*ishārātuh hā'ina wa-'ibārātuh kāmina li-'ārifihim dāmina wa-li-munkirihim fātina*).

(H, X, 33.20–34.1)

This introduction is presented under the rubric *qāla 'l-shaykh*, in common with the other statements that have a demarcating function throughout the ten-volume work. It provides a characterisation of Abū Yazīd in rhyming prose (*sajʿ*), and it contrasts with its counterpart in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, by offering no 'factual' details, such as the full name, origins and date of death of the subject.⁶² The introduction corresponds with much of the contents of the body of the biography which follows it, by acknowledging that utterances attributed to Abū Yazīd are controversial, and it defends these utterances implicitly, by contrasting the judgement of 'those who reject them' (*munkirūhā*) with 'those who understand them' (*ʿārifūhā*), thus implying that the rejectors fail to understand them.

The introduction of the biography of Junayd similarly refers to its subject in *sajʿ*, and in a way that corresponds to impressions given by the segments in the body of the biography. For instance, it begins with the following balanced rhyming clauses: *al-murabbā bi-funūn al-ʿilm, al-muʿayyad bi-ʿuyūn al-ḥilm* (trained in the range of sciences, supported by the gems of gentle persuasion).⁶³ The epistles, verse and lengthy prayers, in particular, offer an image of Junayd which conforms to these characteristics.⁶⁴

As already mentioned, in the *Hilya* the hadith transmission is normally presented at the end of a biography, that is, after its main body. The hadith transmission of the biography of Abū Yazīd is representative of this convention.⁶⁵ However, an alternative transmission of the same hadith (without the inclusion of Abū Yazīd in its *isnād*) is also presented here. Perhaps Abū Yazīd's controversial reputation, and especially the view of 'those who oppose him', meant that the hadith transmission required corroboration of this kind. The unusual presentation of an alternative *isnād*, one without Abū Yazīd, would therefore function in the same way as the aforementioned variant of a controversial utterance which is attributed to the more authoritative Dhū 'l-Nūn.⁶⁶

The hadith transmission in the biography of Abū Yazīd is preceded by the following statement attributed to Abū Nu'aym, which serves as a demarcator between it and the preceding body of the biography:

The shaykh said (*qāla 'l-shaykh . . .*), We restricted ourselves to this amount of his words because of the deep allusions (*ishārāt 'amīqa*) they contain, whose depths no-one reaches except one who has dived into his sea, has drunk from the pure waves of his breast, and understood the utterances of his soul, which are produced and spread from his intoxication (*sukr*). As for hadith transmission (*riwāya*) from him . . .

(H, X, 41.6-8)

Main body/hadith transmission demarcators such as the one presented above are seldom given, but when they are, they often suggest that the amount of material included in the body of the biography has been deliberately restricted; this is not peculiar to the biography of Abū Yazīd.⁶⁷ Whereas this example consists of comments solely about the (preceding) body of the biography, other such demarcators remark also about the subsequent hadith transmission. For instance, the one in the biography of Junayd describes him as having mastered jurisprudence (*aḥkama 'alā 'l-sharī'a*), whilst also adding that his engagement in fulfilling 'the truths' of transmissions prevented him from transmitting many himself (*wa-kāna 'l-qiyām bi-haqā'iq al-āthār yadfa'uh 'an al-riwāya wa-'l-āthār*).⁶⁸

The above demarcator in the biography of Abū Yazīd is particularly significant because of its claim that his utterances are

generated ultimately by his intoxication (*sukr*). A similar explanation presented in the body of this very same biography has been discussed already. In that instance it is offered about Dhū 'l-Nūn, who utters a variant of the same (controversial) claim about a mystical experience as Abū Yazīd, but only when overwhelmed by ecstasy.⁶⁹ The only other instance where intoxication (*sukr*) is mentioned in this biography is in the segment about written correspondence between Abū Yazīd and Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh.⁷⁰ Again, it is not Abū Yazīd who is described as being intoxicated there, but, on the contrary, he rebukes Ibn Mu'ādh dismissively for becoming intoxicated too easily, and imagining that he has reached lofty heights. Since the attribution of intoxication to Abū Yazīd in the main body/hadith transmission demarcator conflicts with the references to intoxication that are found in the actual body of his biography, its role is perhaps not so much to summarise accurately his depiction provided there, but rather to offer a general excuse for the controversial utterances attributed to him – one which reflects the association of his name with mystical intoxication at the time of the later redaction of the *Hilya* when such demarcators were applied.

VI

In Section II of this chapter, it was observed that the *qāla 'l-shaykh* demarcatory statements in the form of 'group introductions' represent a late redaction of the text, rather than its original plan. It was also suggested that the text appears to have grown with interpolation even after this particular redaction. Further support for this interpretation can be found in the overall structure of the biography of Junayd, for its hadith transmission (which has already been noted above as being introduced by a *qāla 'l-shaykh* statement) does not mark the end as one would expect. Instead, it is followed by further segments of material, which form a resumption of the main body.⁷¹ Six segments in total are included in this resumption, each of which is provided with an *isnād*. Their *isnāds* name, in total, three different immediate sources, and they include three different categories of segments, in the following order:

- 1) lengthy prayer - 2) lengthy prayer - 3) epistle - 4) verse -
- 5) verse - 6) lengthy prayer

Lengthy prayers represent the only category which is found exclusively here in the resumption of the main body of the biography of Junayd, for several further examples of epistolical and verse segments are included before the hadith transmission. Whilst it may be possible that the lengthy prayers were grouped intentionally after the hadith transmission, as a form of appendix, this would be inconsistent in the wider context of the *Hilya*, and it would still fall short of explaining why the remaining three segments should have been placed apart from the other examples of their categories present in the main body of the biography.

The fact that the final segment of the main body before the hadith transmission is an account of Junayd's death only underlines that it once signalled its conclusion.⁷² The provision of a resumption of the body of the biography, consisting of segments which are wholly appropriate for inclusion in the main body of the biography, therefore suggests that they were added after an initial redaction. The body of the biography may have become too familiar, and therefore closed to further interpolation, so that new segments could only be added after the hadith transmission, rather than at an appropriate point within the body. Alternatively, they may have been tagged on at the end simply due to a lack of consideration for the regular format of biographies in the *Hilya*.

A similar observation is made by David Daube in the study of Roman and Biblical codes of law.⁷³ He points out that the order of rules in such codes often appears to be 'illogical'. Whereas one would anticipate new rules to be inserted into a code in accordance with their contents, between the old provisions, it is often the case that they are added on at the end. He argues that this is probably due to the fact that the code to which they were added had become too well established. It could no longer be altered internally so there was no option but to add the new rules at the end. Whereas a biography is admittedly a very different context to a code of law, it may still be the case that the segments found after the hadith transmission of the biography of Junayd (including the three examples of lengthy prayers) were positioned there for similar reasons. Although one would expect to find these segments in the main body of the biography, before the hadith transmission, if they are not included there this may be because it had already reached a fixed form, concluding appropriately with a narrative about the subject's death. It had (eventually) become too well recognised to be tampered with; further segments thus accumulated as an appendix.

VII

All of the *isnāds* that are provided in the biography of Abū Yazīd and nearly three quarters of those in the biography of Junayd, suggest that segments were obtained through oral transmission (e.g. *ḥaddathanā, sami'tu . . . yaqūl*). Such *isnāds* in themselves offer few clues regarding the *Sitz im leben* in which this oral transmission took place.

However, the narratives found in the two biographies offer some descriptions of the contexts in which oral transmission could have taken place. They describe situations that were at least familiar and credible to the producers of the material, and were perhaps even projected back to the lifetimes of Abū Yazīd and Junayd respectively. For instance, the passage presented above in Section III of this chapter describes a group of people (*qawm*) sitting around (*jalasa ilā*) Abū Yazīd, while he hangs his head down for some time, before raising it to them to say, 'While you have been sitting down before me, here I have been, roaming my thoughts, looking for a rotten grain which you can bear, to extract for you, but I did not find [anything]'.⁷⁴ The context which is described (albeit as a means of portraying Abū Yazīd's superiority and disdain) is that of a teaching circle, in which segments (even 'rotten grains') are transmitted.

Most of the *isnāds* which suggest written modes of transmission identify the source as 'something written'⁷⁵ by Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Khuldī (d.348/959).⁷⁶ There are three formulae in total by which *isnāds* indicate this:

- 1 *akhbaranā fī-mā kataba ilayya*
'He informed me in something that he wrote to me'⁷⁷
- 2 *kataba ilayya . . . qāla*
'He wrote to me, saying that . . .'⁷⁸
- 3 *akhbaranī fī kitābih*
'He informed me in something that he wrote'⁷⁹

It is not clear whether these formulae are being employed to indicate alternative modes of written transmission, or a single mode. The first two formulae appear to refer to written correspondence from Khuldī (presumably to Abū Nu'aym), but, according to the traditional dates, Abū Nu'aym would have been only twelve years old when Khuldī died.⁸⁰ In that case, what would be the purpose in claiming this? One possible explanation is that the status of written correspondence would have had the effect of

boosting the authority of the material, since it would indicate a direct and personal form of written transmission.

There are several segments in the biographies that have been examined which describe, within their *matns*, written correspondence between Sufis. For instance, in one of the narratives presented above, Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh writes to Abū Yazīd to boast about his intoxication, only to receive a dismissive written reply.⁸¹ Similarly, Aḥmad b. Ḥarb sends, along with a prayer-mat, a written request for Abū Yazīd to pray on it at night (*wajjaha ilayh ḥaṣim wa-kataba ma'ah ilayh, Ṣil 'alayh bi-'l-layl*); Abū Yazīd returns a dismissive written response: *fa-kataba Abū Yazīd ilayh, Innī jamā'at 'ibādāt ahl al-samawāt wa-'l-arḍīn al-sab'a fa-jā'altuhā fī mikḥadda wa-waḍa'tuhā tahta khaddī* (I have gathered the acts of worship of the people of the heavens and the seven climes, and I have put them in a pillow, and placed it under my cheek (i.e. to sleep on)).⁸² Written correspondence is thus another recurrent motif in the *matns* of segments. Although the descriptions are perhaps retrojections, they probably reflect the actual practice, at least by the time of the compilation of the text.

The last of the three formulae presented above (*akhbarānī fī kitābih*) is the most problematic because, taken at face value, *kitāb* may refer, as well as to written correspondence, to a literary work of some form. However, there is no extant book ascribed to Khuldī, and even the Sufi biographical tradition itself has not ascribed books to him.⁸³ The biography of Khuldī in the tenth volume of the *Hilya* itself states that he wrote down segments (*kataba 'l-āthār*).⁸⁴ Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* also contains a biography of Khuldī, which states that he was 'the authority to refer to regarding the sciences of the Sufis, their books, the segments about them and their biographies' (*wa-kāna 'l-marja' ilayh fī 'ulūm al-qawm wa-kutubihim wa-ḥikāyātihim wa-siyarihim*).⁸⁵ Significantly, this comment mentions the books of the (other) Sufis without suggesting that Khuldī wrote any himself.

If it is unlikely then that the formula *akhbarānī fī kitābih* is a reference to a written work composed by Khuldī, it may instead be a reference to written segments, perhaps in the form of a notebook. (Our evidence for the existence of such a source is, after all, precisely written segments). Two further *isnāds* in the biography of Junayd appear to refer to sources of the latter kind, although without reference to Khuldī.⁸⁶ The more elaborate of these is presented below:

I recited to (*qara'tu 'alā*) Abū 'l-Husayn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥabīsh al-Nāqid al-Ṣūfī, a companion of Abū 'l-'Abbās b. 'Aṭā', in Baghdad in the year 359 from something written by him (*kitāb*), and he acknowledged it [as being his own] (*fa-aqarra bih*). I said that I heard Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd b. Muḥammad say . . .

(H, X, 256.4–6)

The above account of an elaborate form of transmission concurs with Calder's observation of *qirā'a* in third century legal texts.⁸⁷ This particular example suggests that Abū Nu'aym recited to Ibn Ḥabīsh from a copy of something the latter had written, and, in response, he confirmed that it was indeed his work. The specific details concerning the time and location of this transmission function to dispel any doubts over its authenticity. The *kitābs*, or 'writings', ascribed to renowned transmitters such as Khuldī may have consisted of written segments (*ḥikāyāt*) transmitted by means of *qirā'a* in a similar fashion.

The following narrative segment in the biography of Junayd offers a vivid description of the process of the production of written segments from a teaching session:

And whenever I came across [Muḥāsibī] in the place where he would sit (*al-makān allādhī yajlis fih*), he would say to me, Ask me something! I would tell him, I do not have a single question to ask you. He would then say, Ask me about anything that comes to your mind! Questions would then rain down upon me and I would ask him about them. He would answer them for me on the spot, and then go to his house and put them into writing.

(H, X, 255.18–256.3)

This narrative alludes to a situation that can be inferred from the literary structures of the *Hilya*, namely the production of written segments by the recording of questions and answers from a teaching session. This particular description is remarkable in that it describes Muḥāsibī, the teacher, as the one who compiles the segments after himself having answered Junayd's questions. This appears to be in order to emphasise the degree to which he valued the sessions with his precocious student.⁸⁸ The depiction of Muḥāsibī may also function to attribute to him the authorship of books based on the inspiration provided by Junayd, who eventually

became more authoritative in tradition than his own teacher. Once again, in contrast to the narratives involving Saqāṭī, Muḥāsibī is depicted as a wise teacher, who, in this particular narrative, has the perception to foresee that Junayd would be inspired with worthwhile questions for him to answer.⁸⁹

To recapitulate, the *isnāds* in our representative biographies of the *Hilya* mostly indicate oral transmission. They suggest that the segments were produced in a teaching milieu, similar to the segments that make up the bodies of the biographies in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*. There also exists a small proportion of segments that appear ostensibly to have been obtained from written sources, namely written correspondence, and the written segments belonging to the collections of other scholars. Most of these sources also would appear to have originated in an oral teaching context. The transmitters and compilers of the *Hilya* seem to have been participants themselves, and their own collections of segments probably formed the bulk of the component materials of the work.

The *isnāds* of all the segments in the *Hilya* are normally understood to represent transmission to Abū Nu'aym, the assumed author of the work. However, there are indications that this cannot always be taken for granted, for Abū Nu'aym himself is mentioned in the *isnāds* of a few segments; he is named as the immediate source by oral transmission of at least three segments,⁹⁰ and in one instance that I have found, he is as far removed as the second transmitter (by *qirā'a*) before the compiler.⁹¹ There is little chance that a namesake is being referred to in these examples because his full name is given, accompanied by the titles and epithets that are usually attributed to him (*al-shaykh*, *al-ḥāfiẓ* etc.).⁹² The inclusion of a *qirā'a* transmission from Abū Nu'aym suggests that he himself possessed a collection of written segments that was used as a source, perhaps even the main source, for the *Hilya*. However, these examples primarily testify that at least some of the segments in the *Hilya* were compiled by his students (and their successors). Abū Nu'aym, the individual to whom the *Hilya* is traditionally ascribed, may have started the compilation, and even made the most significant input towards the final product, but nonetheless, the *Hilya*, in the form in which it has survived today, was not the product of his authorial control from beginning to eventual completion.

VIII

The final statement in the *Hilya*, before the concluding *ḥamd* and *ṣalāt* in praise of God and the Prophet respectively, offers a date for the completion of its compilation:

The author (*mu'allif*) said, This is the last of what I dictated (*amlaytu*), on the last Friday of the month of *Dhū 'l-ḥijja* in the year 422.

(H, X, 408.18–19)

The above statement gives the impression that the work was put into writing through a formal process of dictation by the author. The completion of the dictation is dated within the lifetime of Abū Nu'aym, so he is presumably the one who is being referred to by the title *mu'allif*, even though, to my knowledge, this title is not used elsewhere in the *Hilya*. (Of course, it may have been used uniquely at this point because of the function of this closing statement with regards to the attribution of authorship). The inconsistencies and incoherencies in the form of this work suggest that it was not in fact under the control of a single 'author' in the manner of a dictation, neither Abū Nu'aym nor any other individual. It would appear that a number of individuals participated in the work's compilation, with little co-ordination between their efforts, and that it was completed after Abū Nu'aym's death, incorporating material that had been obtained from him via intermediaries. The fact that the biographies of Sufis from Isfahan are at the culmination of the work, would suggest that the actual compilers probably shared an allegiance to the tradition of Sufism which was associated with Abū Nu'aym's grandfather Ibn Ma'dān. The attribution of the *Hilya* to Abū Nu'aym is probably due to the fact that he was the illustrious collector of biographical segments *par excellence* associated with this school tradition of Isfahan (as testified by his surviving works). Moreover, his own collection of segments perhaps constituted the starting point for the *Hilya*, as well as the main source for its final version.

As already mentioned, the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd are amongst sixty-eight biographies in the tenth volume of the *Hilya* which correspond to those found in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. They are typical of such biographies in that they contain many segments of material that are also found in that earlier work. However, the *isnāds*, on the authority of which they are presented,

do not acknowledge it as their source.⁹³ Most of these *isnāds* do not identify Sulamī as the source at all, whilst those that do invariably indicate oral transmission (e.g. *haddathanā Muḥammad b. al-Husayn qāla / samī' tu Muḥammad b. al-Husayn yaqūl*).⁹⁴ The order of presentation in the *Hilya*, in its present form, of the material that is also found in the *Ṭabaqāt*, does not suggest that the earlier work was used systematically as a source; segments that are found juxtaposed in the earlier work, are often presented apart in the *Hilya* (and vice versa), without any obvious explanation.⁹⁵ However, the likelihood is that this is simply a further effect of the general inconsistency in the ordering of segments, and it is probably attributable to layers of growth and interpolation in the biographies.

Perhaps the most obvious indications of the use of Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* are the sequences of biographies that are juxtaposed in both works. For instance, the biography of Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl al-Balkhī is the first member of a sequence of nine juxtaposed biographies that have counterparts in the earlier work, the first three of which are juxtaposed in exactly the same order in both works. Moreover, the content of these biographies reveals a heavy reliance on Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*. The biography of Balkhī, for instance, possesses an introduction derived from that of its counterpart in the earlier work instead of an introduction in *saḥ* which one would normally expect in the *Hilya*.⁹⁶ Furthermore, its hadith transmission is the same one that is given in its earlier counterpart (just as in the examples of Abū Yazīd and Junayd),⁹⁷ and its body consists entirely of segments derived from that work.⁹⁸

Sulamī is mentioned twice in the *Hilya* outside of the context of an *isnād*. In the second volume, amongst the biographies of 'the people of the canopy' (*ahl al-ṣuffa*),⁹⁹ there is a statement under the rubric *qāla 'l-shaykh*, in which Sulamī is named as someone who had mentioned (*dhakara*) those who 'occupied the canopy'.¹⁰⁰ This is followed by a biographical introduction to Sulamī himself, describing him as someone whom the commentator (presumably Abū Nu'aym) had met (*wa-huwa aḥad man laqīnāh*). However, it does not ascribe any written works to Sulamī. This is all the more surprising since, immediately after this introduction to Sulamī, Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī is introduced as the second person who had mentioned the *ahl al-ṣuffa*, but, in sharp contrast, he is described as the author of famous works. One of them, the *Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk*, is even named specifically as the model for the biographies of 'the

successors' in the *Hilya* (*lah al-taṣānīf al-mashhūra . . . wa-'qtafī fī bāqī 'l-kitāb min dhikr al-tābi'īn ḥadhwah idh huwa shara'a fī ta'līf Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk*).¹⁰¹ In this context, the failure to ascribe written works to Sulamī suggests that, at the time this biographical introduction was entered into the text, his works were not yet known. Sulamī seems to have been recognised simply as someone who mentioned 'the people of the canopy' in an oral teaching context.

The second mention of Sulamī outside of the context of an *isnād* occurs in the following *qāla 'l-shaykh* demarcatory group introduction, which is found at the end of the biography of Abū Yazīd, and immediately before a sequence of six biographies of fellow Khurasanians:

The Shaykh Abū Nu'aym said, As for 'the suns of the East' (*shumūs al-mashriq*) and their eminent ones, Shaykh Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī of Nishapur has taken care to mention them in his book, entitled *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. I wished to put down, in concise form, the names of a group of their famous members in my own book.

(H, X, 41.24–42.2)

This group introduction testifies to familiarity with Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, and so it has presumably been entered into the text after the aforementioned biographical introduction to Sulamī which fails to mention that he was an author at all. The discrepancy between allusions to Sulamī in the above passages suggests that the redaction of the text by means of such *qāla 'l-shaykh* statements (attributed to Abū Nu'aym) was itself a gradual process, during which Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* became familiar. It is likely that at this stage it was used by the redactors as a source of material. The *Hilya* appears to have grown even after the addition of material from Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, such that, in the form in which it eventually reached closure, it does not immediately suggest that the *Ṭabaqāt* was used systematically as a source, whilst at the same time it leaves little doubt that it was relied upon heavily at one stage as a source for both segmental material (the building-blocks) and (architectural) demarcatory introductions.

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*

I

The surviving works ascribed to Abū Ismāʿīl ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (d.481/1089) suggest that he was a Sufi author from Herat, who was also a Hanbalite. His *nisba* implies that his ancestors may have been amongst the Medinan 'helpers' (*anṣār*) of the Prophet Muḥammad's early followers, who are said to have accommodated the Meccan migrants.¹

The earliest biography of Anṣārī is found in Muḥammad b. Abī Yaʿlā's (d.527/1133) *Ṭabaqāt al-Hanābila*. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā introduces Anṣārī, in his brief (15-line) biography, as 'the leader of the Sunnites (*ahl al-sunna*) in Herat', who is known by the title *Shaykh al-Islām*,² and is called *Khaṭīb al-ʿajam* (the orator of the Persians) 'on account of the depth of his knowledge, his eloquence and his eminence'.³ He gives Anṣārī Hanbalite credentials by describing him as a firm opponent of Ashʿarism (*kāna shadīdan ʿalā ʾl-Ashʿariyya*) and a student of Hanbalite authorities on hadith and tafsir. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā finally attributes two distiches of verse to Anṣārī, which begin with the statement *anā hanbalī mā ḥayaytu . . .* (I'll be a Hanbalite as long as I live . . .).⁴ No suggestion is made in this collection of biographies of Hanbalites that Anṣārī might have also been a mystic.

Ibn Yaʿlā also informs us that Anṣārī had two sons, ʿAbd al-Hādī and Jābir, the former of whom was allegedly killed by Ismailis (*fa-qatalathu ʾl-Bāṭiniyya*). Dhahabī (d.748/1348) relates that Anṣārī himself was involved in religious disputes on account of his Hanbalite allegiance, being put on trial many times.⁵ The bulk of

Dhahabī's 145-line biography of Anṣārī is in fact taken up with presenting him as a staunch Hanbalite who would never compromise his belief, even at the cost of being expelled from his native Herat, and putting his life in danger;⁶ Anṣārī is protected and supported by God in his encounters with opponents because of his adherence to the 'correct' school. These are common motifs in biographies of Hanbalites, as well as religious scholars of other affiliations, containing echoes of the biographical tradition of Ibn Ḥanbal himself.⁷ It should finally be noted that Dhahabī depicts Anṣārī also as a Sufi, and ascribes both Sufi and Hanbalite works to him.⁸

Whilst Anṣārī is a celebrated figure from the past for the Hanbalite tradition, the surviving works attributed to him suggest that he was primarily a Sufi. Eleven of the sixteen extant works ascribed to him are specifically mystical in subject matter, while only two can be classified as Hanbalite.⁹ The *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, which is traditionally ascribed to Anṣārī, is the earliest work of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre to have been written in Persian, and it is extant in five manuscripts, the oldest of which states in its colophon that it was copied in 771/1335, nearly 250 years after the death of the assumed author. Much of the text is written in an archaic form of Persian that W. Ivanow has identified as the local dialect in 11th-12th century South Eastern Khurasan.¹⁰

II

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*¹¹ contains over two hundred biographies in an overall chronological arrangement. On first impression, the order of biographies may seem to follow the generation system of Sulamī's work. However, a closer examination reveals the influence of competing methods of arrangement, to an even greater degree than has been observed already in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*. Most of the biographies appear to be arranged according to two different principles, namely, according to generation, and according to the name of the subject.

The former of these predominant methods is comparable to what is observed in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, where biographies are grouped together into generation sections.¹² The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* includes six generation sections, the first five of which correspond approximately (in time-span) to those structured by

Sulamī. Each generation section, apart from the first, is introduced by means of a heading,¹³ and most biographies begin by classifying the subject as a member of a particular generation.¹⁴ These factors make the generation system the most influential one in the final form of the work, and it is presumably on account of this system that it has been given the same title as Sulamī's earlier work.

For almost all of the biographies found in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* there are corresponding ones in this work.¹⁵ These biographies are also usually found in the corresponding generation section.¹⁶ The Persian work also contains additional biographies in each of the five corresponding generation sections, as well as an extra 'sixth generation' (made up of the biographies of individuals who lived too late to be included by Sulamī).

It has already been observed that the order of biographies within the generation sections of Sulamī's work is significant, in that the head biographies tend to be the most important.¹⁷ A comparison between the corresponding generation sections of the two works shows a considerable discrepancy with regard to the head biographies. For example, in the Persian work, the second generation section begins with the biography of Sahl b. 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī (d.283/896),¹⁸ rather than Junayd, whose biography is the fourteenth to be listed.¹⁹ However, in spite of this, Junayd's biography is once again the longest in the second generation, and he also features prominently in the introduction and the appendix of the work. The order of biographies within generation sections therefore does not seem to be managed according to the same principles, or at least not as carefully, as in Sulamī's work.²⁰

It has been noted that the first generation section in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* is designed to forge continuity with the time of the Prophet, through the three generations of 'the pious predecessors' (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*). Therefore it begins with the biographies of Sufis from the second century, and they are linked back to 'the pious predecessors' by a specific statement in the introduction of the work.²¹ The most prominent difference between the first generation sections of the two works is the inclusion, at the start of the Persian *Ṭabaqāt*, of the biography of Abū Hāshim al-Ṣūfī, who is not mentioned at all by Sulamī. Abū Hāshim is said to have been the first person to be called 'Sufi' (*aiwwal kassī ki 'ū-rā Ṣūfī guftand Bū Hāshim Ṣūfī īdh*).²² This is the implicit reason why his biography is the first to be listed. In addition to a few segments about Abū Hāshim, it includes a myth about 'the first *khāniqāh*'

(Sufi lodge) to have been built, which is not related at all to the life-story of Abū Hāshim.²³ Segments about 'firsts' (*awā'il*) therefore appear to have been attracted to the beginning of this work.

The second most prominent principle for the arrangement of biographies in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* is name classification. For example, the following groups of juxtaposed biographies when combined account for more than a fifth of the whole work:

- ten juxtaposed biographies about subjects who have in common the *kunya* Abū 'l-'Abbās/ Bū'l-'Abbās.
(TABA, 294-312)
- nine juxtaposed biographies about subjects who have in common the *kunya* Abū Bakr/ Bū Bakr.
(TABA, 429-437)
- seven juxtaposed biographies about subjects who have in common the *kunya* Abū Ya'qūb/ Bā Ya'qūb.
(TABA, 275-283)
- seven juxtaposed biographies about subjects who have in common the *kunya* Abū Ja'far/ Bū Ja'far.
(TABA, 345-353)
- six juxtaposed biographies about subjects who have in common the *kunya* Abū Bakr.
(TABA, 390-393)
- five juxtaposed biographies about subjects whose names rhyme (Samnūn, Zahrūn, 'Arūn, Maymūn and Sa'dūn Majnūn).
(TABA, 225-231)

This method of arrangement appears, for the most part, in harmony with the generation principle. The two groups of juxtaposed biographies about subjects with the *kunya* Abū Bakr, for instance, occur in separate generation sections, suggesting that they were deliberately separated for this specific reason.

However, there are a few instances where it appears, at first glance, as if the name classification principle conflicts with the generation principle. For instance, the aforementioned group of ten juxtaposed biographies whose subjects are called 'Abū 'l-'Abbās' is found in the third generation section, despite the fact that two of its members are classified at the beginning of their

biographies as belonging to the fifth generation. That is to say, the subjects of two of these biographies are classified as members of the later generation, but nonetheless, they are included amongst the third generation because of their names.²⁴ In many of the examples of this kind, name association is not the only factor. For instance, the biography of Abū Ya'qūb al-Nahrajūrī is amongst the aforementioned group of seven juxtaposed biographies whose subjects are called 'Abū Ya'qūb', located in the third generation section, despite the fact that he is classified as a member of the fourth generation. His biography follows immediately after that of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sūsī who is said to have been his teacher.²⁵ Similarly, the biography of Bū 'Uthmān al-Maghribī, who is classified as belonging to 'the fifth or the sixth generation', immediately follows the biography of Abū 'Uthmān al-Hīrī, who is classified as a member of the second generation. In the introduction to Maghribī's biography, it is reported that his grave is next to that of Hīrī.²⁶ These juxtapositions that conflict with the generation system, point to the existence of a third, less immediately apparent factor, namely the juxtaposition of biographies because of associations between their contents.²⁷

This is not only a factor in causing the juxtaposition of biographies which are classified as belonging to different generation sections, but also in creating inconsistencies in the application of the name classification principle. For instance, a pair of juxtaposed biographies of subjects with the *kunya* Abū 'Abdullāh is separated from the biography of Abū 'Abdullāh al-Jallā' by the biography of Abū 'Ubayd al-Busrī, which begins with a statement attributed to Jallā'.²⁸ Similarly, the biography of Abū Ja'far Majdhūm is separated from the aforementioned group of seven Abū Ja'far biographies by that of Abū 'Abdullāh b. al-Barqī. Ibn al-Barqī is mentioned in the single segment that makes up the biography that precedes his own (the biography of Abū Ja'far Mu'ādh al-Miṣrī).²⁹

To recapitulate, three different factors have been identified in the arrangement of biographies in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*: the generation system established by Sulamī's earlier work, a name classification system and the juxtaposition of biographies whose contents are associated. The generation system is likely to have been applied last of all; it is the most prominent in the final form of the work, and, as already mentioned, generation section headings are provided, as well as allusions to this system at the beginning of most biographies (not to mention in the title of the work). It is

perhaps no wonder then that the later Sufi tradition considered the work to be based on Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*.³⁰ The juxtaposition of biographies according to their subjects' names is a more elementary method of arranging biographies, which was perhaps derived from the way segments of material were stored.³¹ Whilst it may facilitate finding a particular biography, its arbitrariness limits the ability of a compiler to control the structuring of the past. The juxtaposition of biographies due to association between their contents is comparable with, and often an extension of, the juxtaposition of component segments of material with such associations, which is especially prominent in this work.³² The conflict and inconsistencies in the application of each of these principles may have been caused by growth of the text and the direct import of sources with contrasting formats. The end-result is comparable with what has been observed in the *Hilya*, in that there is evidence of layers of redaction activity, rather than a static compilation by a single editor.

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* is comparable with Abū Nu'aym's *Hilya*, not only due to the inconsistent application of competing organisational principles, but also because its redaction devices, such as its introductions to constituent parts of the work, do not always correspond to the context in which they are found. For example, it contains a few cases of (ostensibly) repeated biographies. That is, introductions are given to separate biographies about the same individual, as in the case of Faṭḥ b. Shakhra' al-Marwazī, but only one of them is followed by the body of an actual biography of Marwazī.³³

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt* also contains, uniquely for the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre up to this point, non-biographical chapters intermingled amongst its biographies. An example of such a chapter appears in the middle of the biography of Junayd, and will therefore be considered at length in the fourth section of this chapter.³⁴ These features further emphasise the lack of a single author in control of the final form of the work, after its layers of redactions.

III

Most of the biographies in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* consist of two parts: the introduction and the body. They therefore differ from the biographies of earlier *ṭabaqāt* works, in that they do not

contain a hadith transmission. The latter seems to have been no longer a matter of significance for individual biographies, although hadiths still play a significant role in the work outside of them.³⁵

The body of a biography in this work consists of discrete segments juxtaposed. However, a characteristic innovation is that these segments can be about individuals other than their subjects, as well as those about the subject himself (and often in greater proportion). For instance, the body of the biography of Abū Yazīd is made up of 37 segments, only 12 of which are about Abū Yazīd himself. The remainder are accounted for by 13 segments about other individuals, and 12 segments of commentary presented under the rubric *Shaykh al-Islām guft*. The latter are traditionally understood to be comments made by Anṣārī, and they usually relate to immediately preceding segments, whether they are about Abū Yazīd or another individual. Consider, for example, the following passage from the biography of Abū Yazīd:

- 1 Abū Yazīd was seen after his death in a dream, and was asked, How are you? He replied (*Abū Yazīd-rā pas-i marg bi-khwāb dīdand guftand hāl-i tu guft*), I was asked, Old man what have you brought? I said, When a poor man reaches the court of a king he is asked what he wants not what he has brought!
- 2 *Shaykh al-Islām* said that 'Alī Sharīfī told him, Amongst us in Nishapur there was a poor old woman called "Irāqiyya". She used to beg door-to-door. She died. She was seen in a dream, and was asked, How are you? She replied, I was asked, What have you brought? I said, O all my life I've received assurances that God will provide, and now I am being asked what I have brought? It was said, She is correct, leave her alone!
- 3 **'Alī Sharīfī died in the month of Muḥarram in the year 436 and was buried next to Imām Yaḥyā b. 'Ammār.**
- 4 Fuḍayl 'Iyāḍ was seen after his death in a dream, and was asked, How are you? He replied, **I did not see anything for the slave better than his lord** (*guft lam ara li-'l-'abd khayran min rabbih*).³⁶
- 5 Khayr-i Nassāj was seen after his death in a dream, and was asked, How are you? He replied, What has it got to do with you (*tu-rā azīn chi kār*)? For once I have escaped from this futile world of yours.

- 6 Sarī Saqatī says, I passed by a monastery (*dayr*) and called, O monk (*rāhib*). The monk answered, What is it pagan? I asked, How long have you been here? He answered, Thirty-three years. I asked, What have you learnt in these thirty-three years? He replied, Which servant have you seen coming out of the house of a king and talking about it? What does the secret of the kings have to do with you (*tu-rā bā rāz-i mulūk chi kār*)?
- 7 Shaykh al-Islām said, Conversation with strangers is not correct. First be acquainted, then start to converse.

(TABA, 92.6-93.9)

Only the initial segment of this passage taken from the biography of Abū Yazīd is about the subject himself. The subsequent segments, the addenda, consist of material about other individuals, and commentary attributed to Anṣārī. Segments 1, 2, 4 and 5 each appear to have developed from the same narrative motif. The subject is seen in a dream after he/she has died and is asked about his/her condition. This is expressed identically in Segments 1, 4 and 5: *fulān-rā pas-i marg bi-khwāb dīdand guftand, Hāl-i tu? Guft...* Segment 2 differs because the lesser-known subject requires an introduction. After the statement that she died, this segment continues: *bi-khwāb dīdand guftand, Hāl-i tu? Guft...* It is the closest variant of Segment 1, because both subjects relate their reaction to being asked the same question, *chi āwurdī* (What have you brought)?

Segment 6 is a narrative attributed to Saqatī about a personal encounter with a monk. His account is parallel in structure to Segments 1, 2, 4 and 5, in that an outsider (Saqatī/living person) asks an insider (monk/dead person) about what he has experienced there (monastery/afterlife).

Segments 3 and 7 are related only to the segment which immediately precedes them. Segment 3 offers details about the death of the named source in segment 2, 'Alī Sharīfī. Segment 7 contains an instruction not to enter into conversation with strangers, which is attributed to Anṣārī. It is related to the monk's response in Segment 6, by which he refuses to disclose anything to Saqatī, the Muslim outsider.

Only Segment 2 in the above passage mentions its source; the remaining segments, about Abū Yazīd and other individuals, do not mention their source at all, even though the compiler could

not have obtained them directly. This is typical for the work as a whole, where sources are seldom mentioned. When they happen to be mentioned, a full *isnād* is sometimes provided, or, as above, simply the identity of the first transmitter.

A substantial proportion of this 'Persian' work is in Arabic. Segment 3 is entirely in Arabic, as is conventional for such formulaic death notices. The utterance contained in Segment 4 is in Arabic but the context is described in Persian, *Fudayl 'Iyād-rā pas-i marg bi-khwāb dīdand guftand, Hāl-i tu? Guft, lam ara li-'l -'abd khayran min rabbihi*. There is also an example in the same biography of an Arabic utterance followed by its translation into Persian.³⁷

Segment 3 stands apart from the rest, not only because it is the only one that is entirely in Arabic, but also because it is a 'factual' statement rather than a report of someone's speech. It states when the transmitter of the preceding segment died and where he was buried. Since it only offers information about the latter's death, it is probable that it was interpolated here for the specific purpose of guaranteeing that transmission could have taken place. It was perhaps originally a marginal gloss that became incorporated into the main body of the text.

The final sentence of Segment 2 fits awkwardly,³⁸ and even without it the story about the beggar-woman would still be complete: she dies after a lifetime of begging and is subsequently seen in a dream, reporting that upon being asked what she had brought with her, she had responded with the ironic lament, 'Oh, all my life I've received assurances that God will provide and now I am being asked what I have brought?'

Segment 6 would be complete even without its final sentence, the second question in succession posed by the monk, 'What does the secret of the kings have to do with you?' (*tu-rā bā rāz-i mulūk chi kār?*). The same structure (*tu-rā ... chi kār*) is used in the first part of Khayr-i Nassāj's retort in the preceding segment, 'What has it got to do with you?' It is possible that the final sentence in Segment 6 was generated parallel to this, and the occurrence of a variant of Segment 5 without being juxtaposed to Segment 6, in the biography of Khayr-i Nassāj himself, later in this work, suggests that the two segments were not necessarily transmitted together.³⁹

The above passage can be best described as a 'bundle' of segments. It is typical of such bundles in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, in that it demonstrates the heterogeneity of the

component segments of this work, as well as some of the patterns of association between those that have been juxtaposed. It also contains some examples of what appear to be gloss and interpolation, and signs of possible organic growth.

Even if the segments about Abū Yazīd should be considered in isolation from the other segments in his biography, then the heterogeneity of the segments, and the lack of a single, predominant organising principle would still be evident. For instance, three of such segments about Abū Yazīd himself possess a full *isnād*,⁴⁰ four of them name only the first transmitter,⁴¹ and the remaining five segments offer no source details. The latter group includes variants of segments found in earlier works provided with their own *isnāds*.⁴² Different methods of presentation are also used for the texts of the Abū Yazīd segments; out of the eleven utterances attributed to him, five are presented in Arabic and six in Persian. One of the Arabic utterances is followed immediately by a Persian translation,⁴³ whilst another is preceded by an *isnād* and contextual framework in Persian.⁴⁴ There are therefore no indications that the segments about Abū Yazīd may have once represented a 'unified core', in relation to which other segments could have been interpolated later. That is to say, the segments about Abū Yazīd, just like the other segments in his biography, appear to have been compiled as part of an extended process by a number of individuals who had different preferences with regard to presentation.

It seems strange for a work traditionally believed to have been produced on the basis of Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* that only two of the segments in the biography of Abū Yazīd should correspond to segments in that precursor. These two apophthegmatic utterances are in fact juxtaposed and identical to their earlier counterparts: *kufṛ ahl al-himma aslam min imān ahl al-minna* (the unbelief of those with aspiration is sounder than the belief of those who seek reward), *ab'adu 'l-khalq min Allāh aktharuhum ishāratun ilayh* (the furthest people from God are those who point to him the most).⁴⁵ To put these two cases into perspective, it should be noted that there are just as many in this biography that are variants of those found in the corresponding biography of Abū Nu'aym's *Hilya*. Nonetheless, the fact that the two aforementioned segments are both juxtaposed and identical to their earlier counterparts suggests that Sulamī's work was used, at least as one of the sources for the Persian work. It was probably used during the same

(relatively late) redaction of the work, in which the generation system was applied, along with all of its trappings, as the predominant organising principle for the order of presentation of biographies.⁴⁶

This biography of Abū Yazīd also curiously includes variants of a couple of short utterances which are found attributed to him in earlier works, only here they are attributed to other religious authorities, namely the first Rightly-guided Caliph, Abū Bakr, and the mystic authority, Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī.⁴⁷ It has already been suggested that the existence of such variants attributed to different individuals highlights the transferability of this kind of biographical material. However, it is unlikely to be a mere coincidence that these utterances are attributed to individuals other than Abū Yazīd here in his own biography, nor that both of the individuals concerned are more authoritative figures in tradition than Abū Yazīd himself. It suggests that out of a desire to give more weight to the respective utterances they had been attributed to more authoritative individuals, but had still remained associated with Abū Yazīd, and thus appear in his own biography in this very loosely-controlled compilation.⁴⁸ The inclusion of a high proportion of segments about other individuals in the biography of Abū Yazīd also has the effect of embedding material attributed to him within a wider tradition of mysticism and piety. In contrast to the biography of Abū Yazīd, the body of the biography of Junayd contains nearly twice as many segments about the subject himself, than about other individuals. This discrepancy is probably a sign of the greater acceptance of him in tradition, such that material attributed to him is without the need for any corroboration.

IV

Whilst the body of the biography of Junayd contains a higher proportion of segments about the subject himself, it nonetheless contains more indications of interpolation and organic growth than the body of the biography of Abū Yazīd. This can be interpreted as another indication of the greater importance attached to Junayd by those who compiled this work. A prominent example of such growth and interpolation is the appearance of the chapter heading *Mas'ala fī 'l-tawhīd* (An issue concerning divine

unity) only a few pages after the heading for the biography of Junayd itself.⁴⁹ This heading implies the start of a new, thematic chapter about *tawhīd*, and the close of the biography of Junayd (and it has been interpreted thus by the modern editors). The next heading after *Mas'ala fī 'l-tawhīd* is that of the biography of Ibn al-Karanbī, a Sufi associated with Junayd.⁵⁰ These headings suggest the following sequence of chapters:

- 1 The biography of Junayd
- 2 A thematic chapter about *tawhīd*
- 3 The biography of Ibn Karanbī

A close inspection of the contents of the so-called chapter on *tawhīd* suggests that this sequence is not so clearly defined. Particularly conspicuous in this regard are the sequences of segments that form its beginning and its closing sections, respectively, which are both related closely to the preceding biography of Junayd whilst being unrelated to the topic of *tawhīd*. For instance, towards the end of the chapter on *tawhīd*, the following segment triggers the start of a continuous sequence of segments unrelated to *tawhīd*, which reaches as far as the demarcating heading that signals the start of the biography of Ibn Karanbī:

Shaykh al-Islām said that Junayd says, People think that I am the student of Sarī Saqaṭī, [but] I am the student of Muḥammad 'Alī Qaṣṣāb, whom I asked, What is Sufism? He replied, I do not know, but it is a noble (*karīm*) character which God (the Noble) manifests in a noble time, through a noble man, amongst a noble people (*qawm-i kirām*).

(TABA, 182.3-6)

The above segment consists of an utterance attributed to Qaṣṣāb introduced by Junayd, who declares that Qaṣṣāb was his teacher rather than Saqaṭī. It is unrelated to *tawhīd*, even though the last chapter heading to precede it is *Mas'ala fī 'l-tawhīd*, implying that it belongs to that chapter. However, it is relevant for the biography of Junayd, especially since it begins with a statement attributed to him about his alleged teacher. In fact, it may even be associated with the polemic regarding the relative superiority of Junayd's teachers, which has already been suggested as a factor behind the curious denigration of Saqaṭī in the corresponding biography of the *Hijā*.⁵¹ The above segment marks the start of a final section of forty-three lines of text, still under the heading of *Mas'ala fī 'l-tawhīd*, which is

not related to *tawhīd* at all, but is related to Junayd. This final section is made up of the above segment, an extensive commentary to it, as well as another utterance attributed to Junayd, and commentary to that utterance. The second utterance is presented below:

Junayd said, Lack of ecstasy (*wajd*) is not harmful when it is accompanied with excess of knowledge (*'ilm*), because excess of knowledge is more complete than excess of ecstasy.

(TABA, 184.2-3)

The above utterance is also unrelated to *tawhīd*, but relevant for a biography of Junayd. In fact, the same utterance is repeated in the main body of the biography before the heading *Mas'ala fī 'l-tawhīd* which appears to mark its closure.⁵² The repetition of this segment in the above location, ostensibly towards the end of the chapter *Mas'ala fī 'l-tawhīd*, alongside other material that is relevant to a biography of Junayd, but not relevant at all to a thematic chapter on *tawhīd*, confirms that the boundaries between chapters were not always defined as they now appear. It suggests a resumption of the body of the biography of Junayd after a diversion into the topic of *tawhīd*. This diversion dissects the body of the biography of Junayd into an initial part and a resumption, and the distance thus created probably contributed to the repetition of the same segment.

The beginning of the so-called chapter on *tawhīd* confirms these indications. The first segment, which is presented below, is appropriately about *tawhīd*, but it may also be considered relevant to the biography of Junayd.

- 1 *Shaykh al-Islām* said that Junayd said, For thirty years I have not said anything about *tawhīd* (Divine Unity), but have spoken [only] about matters peripheral to it.
- 2 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, Two individuals have said two different things. The first, Junayd, who said that it is knowledge, the carpet of which has not been woven for thirty years, during which people have spoken [only] about matters peripheral to it, that is knowledge of *tawhīd*. I do not know what he is talking about at all, because knowledge of *tawhīd* has nothing to do with tongues (i.e. is beyond words). The second, Bū Bakr Kattānī, [who] says that the least part of the knowledge of Sufism is something which you cannot discover. The latter spoke well.

(TABA, 169.7-13)

The above passage can be divided into two discrete segments, as shown. Segment 1 offers an utterance attributed to Junayd, stating that he has only talked about matters peripheral to *tawhīd* for thirty years, and not directly about *tawhīd* itself. Segment 2, which may appear at first to be a commentary on Segment 1, in fact offers a variant of it (in which 'people' (*mardumān*) are said to have failed to speak about knowledge of *tawhīd*), followed by an utterance attributed to Abū Bakr al-Kattānī. These two utterances have apparently been juxtaposed for comparison, in spite of the fact that the latter utterance is about *ʿilm-i taṣawwuf* (knowledge of Sufism), rather than *ʿilm-i tawhīd*. Thus, the heading *Mas'ala fi 'l-tawhīd* is followed immediately by the above two segments, both of which involve Junayd, as well as relating to the topic of *tawhīd*. Nonetheless, without the chapter heading, the above passage may have been considered merely an extension of the preceding body of the biography of Junayd.

A factor which may have made Segment 2 unusual for the biography of Junayd is its criticism of him and expressed preference for the opinion attributed to Kattānī. The biography of Junayd contains no other instance of criticism – a feature seldom found in any of the biographies in works of the *ṭabaqāt* genre. The inclusion of a new chapter heading, at this particular location in the text, may therefore have been determined by this criticism, as an attempt to exclude it from the biography of the subject. This interpretation is further supported by the content of the six segments which follow immediately after the above passage, since none of them are related to *tawhīd*, and yet all but one are about Junayd (the exception being a segment of commentary attributed to Anṣārī). This sequence of six segments culminates in the following narrative:

Shaykh al-Islām said that ʿAbdullāh Saʿīd Kilāb had become famous for asceticism (*zuhd*). According to him, he was asked, Why do you not refute anything about the Sufis? He replied, I am not acquainted with their science (*ʿilm*). He was told, There is a Sufi authority here, their teacher (*ustādh*) and leader (*sara*), who has knowledge and teachings beyond the knowledge of a scholar. He came and listened to Junayd's speech, and asked him questions which [Junayd] answered, and then he stood up and said to his student, If there should be on earth a group over whom our words do not have

precedence, then it is them, and a science which refutes our science and holds it in little value, then it is their science.

(TABA, 170.4–11)

The above segment is also not related to *tawhīd*, the supposed topic of the chapter in which it is found. Rather, it narrates an encounter involving Junayd. Although it is slightly ambiguous in places,⁵³ it appears to function to confirm the soundness of Junayd's 'science' (of Sufism). A famous ascetic listens to Junayd and, as a result, holds the Sufis and their science in the highest estimation, rather than refuting them. This segment would therefore be most appropriate for the biography of Junayd.

The above segment marks the end of a sequence of segments covering twenty one lines at the beginning of the so-called chapter on *tawhīd*, which consists entirely of such material about Junayd that, apart from the first two segments, is totally unrelated to *tawhīd*. It is, however, followed by a continuous sequence of segments that are related to *tawhīd*, and form the bulk of the chapter. That sequence of segments ends at the aforementioned utterance attributed to Junayd about his teachers, which marks the beginning of the closing section of the chapter (see above). The closing section consists mostly of segments about Junayd, and contains no material at all which is related to *tawhīd*.

To recapitulate, the chapter entitled *Mas'ala fi 'l-tawhīd*, can be divided into three sections. The middle section, which is made up of segments about *tawhīd*, forms the bulk of the chapter, thus accounting for its title. The initial section and the closing section, however, are more relevant for the biography of Junayd, which immediately precedes the chapter. These characteristics suggest that it has in fact grown out of that biography. It begins with an utterance attributed to Junayd about *tawhīd*, followed immediately by other biographical segments about Junayd, prior to material about *tawhīd*. This suggests a gradual emergence of the chapter on *tawhīd*, by the attraction of thematically associated segments, comparable to the creation of a 'bundle' of juxtaposed segments (see Section III above). Moreover, the chapter ends with a return to biographical material about Junayd, indicating a resumption of his biography. It reinforces the impression that the material about *tawhīd* dissects the biography of Junayd, splitting its main body into two parts. The analysis of this part of the work suggests the following sequence, presented opposite the given headings:

According to headings:

A biography of Junayd

B thematic chapter about *tawhīd*

C biography of Ibn Karanbī.

According to content:

A

1 biography of Junayd

B

2 utterance by Junayd about *tawhīd*

3 biographical segments about Junayd

4 segments about *tawhīd*

5 biographical segments about Junayd

C

6 biography of Ibn Karanbī.

The existence of thematic chapters is a distinctive feature of the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. Another example is found mid-way through the biography of Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz, the so-called chapter on *yāft* ('finding').⁵⁴ It is not immediately obvious why it should be located here. However, the final utterance attributed to Kharrāz before this chapter also mentions *yāft*, 'The beginning of this matter is acceptance (*qabūl*) ... and the end of it is 'finding' (*yāft*).'⁵⁵ It is therefore likely that this chapter was created by the attraction to this utterance of segments related to the topic *yāft*. It ends (after twelve pages) at a segment about Kharrāz which is not related to *yāft*, signalling a resumption of the latter's biography.⁵⁶

A similar thematic chapter is also found within the biography of Dhū 'l-Nūn. This consists largely of an expanded typology of 'ilm (knowledge) that is attributed to Anṣārī. The same pattern occurs as in the aforementioned examples; that is, the chapter is preceded by an utterance attributed to Dhū 'l-Nūn on different types of 'ilm, and it ends with a resumption of his biography.⁵⁷

Thematic chapters in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* thus appear to have grown from biographies; that is, they are formed when a long sequence of thematically associated segments of addenda is generated by a segment attributed to the subject of the biography. Due to the considerable length of the 'bundle' that is created in this way, eventually it has managed to puzzle redactors, who have decided to classify it as a thematic chapter. In this way, it appears to mark the close of the preceding biography, out of which it has grown, only for that to be resumed after the bundle. It is perhaps no coincidence that such thematic chapters tend to be 'growths' from the longer, and more important, biographies in the work. Biographies that attracted the most attention from compilers and redactors during the stages of the process of compilation, and

which would carry more weight, were more prone to interpolation of material in this way.

The body of the biography of Junayd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* does not contain any segments at all that are variants of those found in the body of Sulamī's corresponding biography. However, it does contain variants of two segments that are found in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*. Consider the following example:

TA Junayd says, the drowning of ecstasy (*wajd*) in knowledge ('ilm) is better than the drowning of knowledge in ecstasy.

(TABA, 169.1–2)⁵⁸

H Junayd was asked, Which of these is more complete: the drowning of knowledge ('ilm) in ecstasies (*wujūd*) or the drowning of ecstasies in knowledge? He said, The drowning of knowledge in ecstasies. Those who have knowledge of God are not like his ecstasies (*wājidūn*).

(H, X, 275.18–20)

As a result of the reversal of the respective positions of 'ilm and *wajd/wujūd*, the above utterances convey opposite messages: the variant in the *Hilya* (H) suggests that the experience of ecstasy is superior to knowledge, whilst the variant in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* (TA) suggests that the exact opposite is the case. The existence of such variants, attributed to the same authority, but with opposite meanings, is an indication of the dynamic nature of the process of transmitting, recalling and re-forming biographical material. It demonstrates the extent to which biographical material can serve the purposes of later transmitters and compilers.

V

As previously mentioned, most biographies in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* can be divided into two main parts: the introduction and the body. The introductions of those biographies for which there is a corresponding one in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* tend to be similar to their counterparts. To illustrate this point, the introduction of the biography of Abū Yazīd is presented below, followed by its counterpart in Sulamī's work. For ease of comparison the introductions are divided into numbered constituent elements.

Amongst the first generation is Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī

TA1 *Shaykh al-Islām* said that his name is Ṭayfūr b. 'Isā b. Ādam b. Surūshān.

TA2 His great-grandfather, Surūshān, was a Magian who became a Muslim.

TA3 Bāyazīd was a companion of Aḥmad Khaḍrawayhi and he had seen Bū Ḥaḥṣ, Yaḥyā Mu'ādh and Shaqīq Balkhī.

TA4 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, His teacher (*ustādh*) was a Kurd. He is next to him in the grave in Baṣṭām. Bāyazīd, out of reverence for the teacher, requested, Dig my grave deeper than that of my teacher! (i.e. lay me to rest at a lower level than my teacher).

TA5 Bāyazīd was a Hanafite (*ṣāhib-i ra'y būda dar madhhab*), but a [station of] sainthood (*wilāyat*) opened up to him in which school allegiance (*madhhab*) was not obvious.

TA6 His death was in the year 261. It is also said that it was in the year 234, but 261 is more correct.

(TABA, 87.10–88.8)

Amongst them (the first generation) is Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. 'Isā b. Surūshān

TS1 His grandfather, Surūshān, was a Magian who converted to Islam.

TS2 They were three brothers: Ādam, Ṭayfūr and 'Alī, and all of them were ascetics and pietists, and were endowed with mystical states.

TS3 He was from Baṣṭām.

TS4 He died in the year 261 according to what I heard 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī say, who heard Ṭayfūr b. 'Isā 'l-Ṣaghīr say that he heard 'Ammī 'l-Baṣṭāmī say that he heard his father say, Abū Yazīd died in the year 261. I heard al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā say, Abū Yazīd died in the year 234. God knows best concerning it.

(TABS, 60.1–10)

The introduction of the biography of Abū Yazīd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* can be divided into six elements, as shown

(TA1–TA6). The second and the sixth elements (TA2, TA6) appear to be almost exact Persian translations of the corresponding elements (TS1 and TS4) in Sulamī's introduction to Abū Yazīd, whilst the first element offers information about Abū Yazīd's full name, which is provided already in the heading of the earlier biography.⁵⁹

Elements TA3, TA4 and TA5 offer new information. It has already been observed that the introduction to the biography of Abū Yazīd in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* is particularly brief, lacking any information about the subject's associates.⁶⁰ These gaps are filled by TA3 and TA4, the former providing a list of Sufis with whom he associated (*aqrān*) and whom he had seen (*ḍida hud*). TA4 specifies further that Abū Yazīd's teacher (*ustādh*) was the Kurd who is buried next to him. This point is illustrated by an anecdote emphasizing Abū Yazīd's reverence for his teacher. TA5 affirms that Abū Yazīd was an affiliate of the Hanafite school (*ṣāhib-i ra'y*), and implies that it may not always have been apparent that he had any such affiliation because of the lofty station which he had attained. This is perhaps an attempt to affirm that Abū Yazīd, in spite of being a controversial figure in tradition, actually had allegiance to a form of scholastic Islam. In this case, it would perform the equivalent function to comments found in the *Hilya*'s introduction to Abū Yazīd, which asserts that Abū Yazīd was essentially sound, despite any appearances to the contrary.⁶¹

A comparison between the introductions of the biographies of Junayd in the two works offers similar impressions.

Amongst the second generation is Junayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Qawārīn Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Zajjāj al-Khazzāz, the Chief of the gnostics (*sayyid al-'arīfīn*)

TA1 It is said that his father sold glassware, and on account of that he is called *qawārīn* (glass trader).

TA2 It is said that his origins were from Nihavand and the place where he settled was Iraq.

TA3 He was a jurist according to [the method of] Bū Thawr, the best student of Shāfi'ī. He used to give his (Bū Thawr) fatwas.

TA4 He had been a companion of Sarī Saqaṭī, Hārith Muḥāsibī and Muḥammad Qaṣṣāb, and he was their student (*shāgird*).

TA5 He is one of the leaders (*a'imma*) and chiefs (*sādāt*) of this group, and is acceptable on all tongues (*maqbul bar hama zabānhā*).

TA6 It is said, In the world there are three individuals belonging to this generation who are without equals: Junayd in Baghdad, Bū 'Abdullāh Jallā in Syria and Bū 'Uthmān Hiri in Nishapur.

TA7 Shaykh Bū Ja'far Haddād says, If intellect were a man, it would be in the form of Junayd.

TA8 He died in the year 297, and his son prayed over him on the Caliph's New Year's Day (*nayrūz-i khalīfa*), a Saturday. It is said that he died at the end of Friday and was buried on Saturday. That night, someone saw Mustafī (the Prophet) in a hurry. That person asked him, O Messenger of God, where are you going? He replied, I am hurrying to the funeral of the Caliph (*khalīfa*), and went away. The next day, that person walked around Baghdad, asking about the Caliph. He was told that [the Caliph] was fine. Finally, he heard that Junayd had died – the Prophet had called him the 'Caliph'!

(TABA, 161.8–162.12)

Amongst them (the second generation) is al-Junayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Junayd Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Khazzāz

TS1 His father used to sell glass and so he was called *al-qawārīrī* (glass trader).

TS2 His origins are from Nihavand, but he was born and brought up in Iraq. I heard Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Naṣrābādī say that.

TS3 He was a jurist and used to practise according to [the method of] Abū Thawr. He used to give fatwas in his circle.

TS4 He followed Sarī 'l-Saqatī, Hārith al-Muḥāsibī and Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'l-Qaṣṣāb al-Baghdādī.

TS5 He was one of the leaders (*a'imma*) and chiefs (*sādāt*) of the group and is acceptable 'on all tongues' (*maqbul 'alā jamī' al-alsina*).

TS6 He died in 297 on the Caliph's New Year's Day, which was a Saturday. It is said that he died in the last hour of Friday and was buried on Saturday. I heard Abū 'l-Hasan b. Miqsam mention that.

(TABS, 141.1–142.2)

The introduction of the biography of Junayd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* includes corresponding elements for each of the six elements that make up Sulamī's introduction (TS1–TS6), usually in the form of Persian translations of the original Arabic.⁶² It also offers two further elements (TA6, TA7), which are included immediately after a remark about the authority and universal acceptance of Junayd. These two elements are essentially discrete biographical segments that have been inserted into their respective positions by virtue of thematic association. They expand on the function of TA5, to affirm the high estimation of Junayd in the opinion of other Sufis.

The final element in the introduction of the biography of Junayd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* offers, in addition to the dates of his death found in its earlier counterpart, a narrative related to this event. This narrative serves to underline further Junayd's authority, by claiming that the Prophet himself, in a dream on the night of Junayd's death, implied that Junayd was 'the Caliph' to whose funeral he was hurrying. This narrative seems to have been generated by the mention of Junayd's death falling on the Caliph's New Year's Day (*nayrūz-i khalīfa*).⁶³

To recapitulate, the introductions of the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* appear to be based closely on the corresponding introductions in Sulamī's work. They are largely made up of Persian translations of the constituent elements of their earlier counterparts. In this way, they are representative of the introductions of biographies in the later Persian work for which there are counterparts in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*. This close correlation between the two works with regard to the introductions of their biographies, contrasts sharply with the lack of correlation between the bodies of their corresponding biographies, for it has already been observed that the latter bear little relation to each other.

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt* as a whole contains a few segments within the bodies of its biographies that are introduced as transmissions obtained directly from Sulamī, all but one of which are introduced

as oral transmissions.⁶⁴ Two of them, in fact, are exact Persian translations of segments found in Sulamī's earlier work. Significantly, although they are found in the bodies of biographies in the later Persian work, they are both originally found in the introductions of biographies in Sulamī's work.⁶⁵ These indications corroborate the impression that the organisational framework of the earlier work was used systematically as a model; the introductions to biographies as well as their arrangement in generation sections are thus prominent in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt*, whereas there are relatively very few indications that material may have also been obtained from the bodies of the biographies in the precursor.

Thus Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* provided the 'architecture' without supplying a significant proportion of the 'building-blocks'. As already mentioned, a number of competing methods of organising material are evident in the final form of the work, the most predominant of which is Sulamī's generation method, which appears to have been the last one to have been applied. Furthermore, the introductions of biographies seem to have been entered at the same stage of redaction as the generation system, on the basis of Sulamī's model, yet they have generated further growth of material (e.g. *khalīfa* dream narrative) before the eventual closure of the text.

VI

In order to gain an insight into the processes by means of which the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* was put together, it is worthwhile to focus on its component segments. Most of the segments in this work are introduced under the rubric *Shaykh al-Islām guft* (i.e. 'Anṣārī said'). Examples already encountered include both commentary on preceding material and segments about other individuals (introduced by Anṣārī). Such introductions suggest that segments were transmitted orally, but do not reveal much else about the context of transmission. Clues to the *Sitz im Leben* of this material are found in the few introductions of segments that provide further detail, such as the following examples.

- 1 *Shaykh al-Islām* dictated to us (*imlā kard*) on the authority of Muḥammad b. al-Junayd, who said ...

(TABA, 9.12)

- 2 *Shaykh al-Islām* advised, Write down this segment (*hikāyat*) and learn it, for you will not receive anything about Shiblī, on his authority, better than this segment ...

(TABA, 380.4–5)

The above examples refer to the transmission of segments by Anṣārī to an audience of students. Segments were apparently read out for the students to write down (presumably in some form of notebook). In the second example, the students are instructed to record a specific segment that is considered important by Anṣārī. Thus it is implied that segments were evaluated and collected, and that they were written down as an aid to memory.⁶⁶ Regardless of whether they were written by Anṣārī's students themselves and describe what actually happened or not, these descriptions remain significant. They point to a context in which segments were dictated and entered into notes that was familiar and credible to the compilers, who may have been Anṣārī's students, or perhaps later generations of his successors (since the text shows many indications of layers of growth over an extended period).

There is also perhaps an indication of the *Sitz im Leben* of the material in the following:

- 3 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, In my box (*ja'ba*) there is this segment from Shaykh Aḥmad Kūfānī which is of value ...

(TABA, 522.1–2)

Assuming that *ja'ba* is not being used metaphorically here, it appears to be a reference to a store of segments. It is to be expected that written segments would have been stored in some fashion, and in an order that would facilitate retrieval. The *ja'ba* may be a reference to such a 'filing box'. Segments may have been filed according to the names of their transmitters, as the above example suggests.

The following introduction to a segment of commentary (about the execution of Ḥallāj) is also instructive:

- 4 Amongst the fragments belonging to *Shaykh al-Islām* was, written in his handwriting, his diary writings, this detail ... (*dar juz'hā-yi Shaykh al-Islām būd bi-khaṭṭ-i way niwishta nūznāmā-yi way īn muṣaṣṣal* ...)

(TABA, 321.1–2)

This introduction to a segment has posed problems to both scribes and editors.⁶⁷ It is probably best understood as a sequence of glosses, each of which is intended to give authority to the text that follows. It begins by stating that the segment was found in Anṣārī's 'fragments' (*dar juzwhā-yi Shaykh al-Islām būd*), possibly referring to scattered notes of written segments. A phrase follows immediately which specifies that the segment was written in Anṣārī's own handwriting (*bi-khatt-i way niwishta*), presumably to reinforce its authority. (It may be taken to imply that some of Anṣārī's collection of 'fragments' may have been written by others). Finally the mention of 'his diary-writings' (*rūznāmahā-yi way*) seems to have been tagged on for good measure.

It is worth noting that the above sentence does not claim that the material was heard from Anṣārī directly. Rather it suggests a process of text-creation whereby segments of material in various written sources were used to create a new text. The sentence also implies that writings attributed to Anṣārī ('fragments' and 'diary-writings') had survived, and were perhaps even in the possession of the glossators themselves. One could speculate that the writings may have been preserved by later generations of successors, as part of the 'collected writings' belonging to Anṣārī and his tradition (perhaps even in the 'file-box'), from which segments could later be extracted and incorporated into the text.

In summary, the four introductions presented above describe the transmission of segments during teaching sessions. Anṣārī dictates from his own collection of written segments. The students do not just listen and memorise; they also take notes and thus presumably build up their own collections of segments. Notes, which are taken down by Anṣārī himself, and his students, both become incorporated into the final work.

Introduction 2 implies, with regard to note-taking, that students did not write down everything they heard. Like students of any age they normally selected for themselves what to record, although occasionally their teacher may have instructed them to note down a specific segment that he considered important. This underlines that it is normally the student who judges what he hears, and decides whether to record a segment or not. He is therefore the author of his own notes, even if they happen to be based on the teachings of others. In both form and content these notes indicate the predilections of the one who has taken them.

Anṣārī is quoted in Example 2 as saying to his students, 'You will not receive (*nayārand shumā-ra*) anything about Shiblī, on his authority,⁶⁸ better than this segment ...' It perhaps implies that students obtained material for their notebooks from different sources in the pursuit of as many worthwhile segments as possible, and highlights further hazards involved in regarding a student's notes as the work of his teacher. They can only be regarded so, with any degree of confidence, if the teacher dictates a work from beginning to end to his student, and then checks over and redacts the notes himself into a canonical form.⁶⁹ This is clearly not the case with the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. The inconsistencies, incongruous juxtapositions and frequent breaks in the text all indicate that it was not subject to these kinds of controls.

Norman Calder makes similar observations, regarding the use of notes as an aid to oral activity. His references to their use in the fields of *adab* and *fiqh* parallel what is found here, including the following comments from Jāhīz's *Kitāb al-Bayān*: 'A word preserved in your heart is better than ten in your notebook', 'A man writes down the best that he hears, and he memorises the best that he writes down.'⁷⁰ Such segments point to the similar use of notebooks at a (much earlier) time when cultural activity was still predominantly oral. Calder has argued that the transition to a literary milieu was effected largely 'through the mediation of notebooks'.⁷¹ The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* would appear to be an example of a later process of text-creation from teaching session notes.

VII

To recapitulate, taking into consideration the observations made in the previous sections of this chapter regarding this highly problematic text, one can say with confidence that the Persian work traditionally known as Anṣārī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* is an 'unauthored' work. It is essentially a compilation of heterogeneous segments of material, which have been extracted from the notes of a number of individuals, and at different times. The text has also grown over an extended period after the initial compilation. It shows more signs of interpolation and interference than the *Hilyat al-awliyā*, which itself appears to have grown for up to two generations after its named 'author'.⁷² The *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* was probably compiled in one location, namely Herat, since the use of

an archaic form of Persian, which is associated with that region in the 11th and 12th centuries, predominates throughout. In view of the importance of the teaching context for the collection of the material, it would not be too far-fetched to suggest that this is a 'school-text' – a text that became the repository for the expression of the views of Anṣārī's successors in Herat. If it came to be remembered as his work, it is probably because he was looked back upon as the founder of the school, on whose teachings the work may originally have been based.

The process by which this work eventually reached its final form appears to have involved at least two major redactions. This is evident from the arrangement of biographies, for which the main organising principles appear to have been applied in succession. As already mentioned, it seems that the biographies were originally ordered according to the names of their subjects. Later, they were rearranged (overlooking a few cases which now create incoherency) according to a generation system derived from Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*. Indeed, it is presumably on account of this generation (*tabaqa*) system that the Persian work was also named *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*.

The introductions of biographies in Sulamī's earlier work also appear to have been used as the basis for the corresponding introductions in this work. This was probably carried out at the same stage as when the generation system was used as a model, since introductions serve as demarcators for the overall organisational framework. Occasionally they appear to have been inserted incorrectly; this occurs where the redactor has presumably mistaken the mere mention of someone's name in a segment for the start of a new biography, and has consequently inserted an introduction. It confirms that they were added in a later redaction, rather than constituting the demarcations of the original framework, and they corroborate the impression that Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* was relied upon only at a later stage, and not as the starting-point of the Persian work.

As already mentioned, one effect of the misapplication of introduction demarcators is the creation (at least ostensibly) of more than one biography about the same individual. For example, there are two introductions to biographies of Abū 'l-Abbās al-Surayj (d.306/918), the Shafi'ite jurist of Baghdad.⁷³ The first of these marks ostensibly the start of the second biography to follow that of Junayd. It continues with the narrative which is presented below:

One day he (Surayj) passed by the edge of Junayd's session, listened and went away. Someone asked him, How did you find Junayd? He replied, **I do not know anything about the secrets of this group except that this Shaykh has an awe-inspiring presence (*ṣawla*) which is not like that of the vain.**⁷⁴

(TABA, 184.15–185.3)

The above narrative appears to function to confirm the authority of Junayd, by attributing a positive opinion of him to the jurist Surayj. It consists of the same motif as the aforementioned narrative in which 'Abdullāh Sa'īd Kīlāb, a renowned ascetic, listened to Junayd and then gave a positive estimation of him.⁷⁵ In this way, it is as equally relevant as that narrative for the biography of Junayd, which comes to a close only a few lines of text earlier. It was probably indeed intended for it, but eventually became mistaken for an independent biography, thus acquiring its own demarcatory introduction in a later redaction. The other introduction to a biography of Surayj is followed by a narrative which functions to give authority to Surayj himself, by describing him as putting a questioner into a trance (*way bāng bi-kard wa'z hūsh bi-shud*).⁷⁶

Whilst it appears that Sulamī's generation system for arranging biographies, as well as his introductions to biographies, were used as a model in a late redaction, it is probable that the text continued to be subject to organic growth even after this stage. One of the indications of this is found at the start of the body of Junayd's biography, which includes segments that appear to have been generated by the preceding (Sulamī-based) introduction, such as the dream narrative about the Prophet, generated by the preceding mention of 'the Caliph's New Year' (see above). Another segment that has been inserted to a position towards the start of the biography, presumably on account of this remark, is the following:

Shaykh al-Islām said that the Caliph of Baghdad said to Ruwaym, Hey ill-mannered one! [Ruwaym] responded, I am not ill-mannered, I have kept company with Junayd!⁷⁷

(TABA, 163.9–11)

The above narrative describes Ruwaym b. Aḥmad (d.303/915–16) as confidently contradicting the Caliph because of his high estimation of the virtue of companionship with Junayd. It is thus

implied that Junayd's authority is greater than that of the Caliph of Baghdad, at least in the eyes of the Sufi Ruwaym b. Aḥmad. In this way the narrative is similar to the aforementioned one in which the Prophet calls Junayd *khalīfa*. It is likely then, that this too was generated ultimately by the introduction of the biography.

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* ends with a series of segments related to *ma'rifa* (gnosis). These segments concern different individuals, most of whose biographies are included earlier in the work.⁷⁸ This curious section, which makes up nearly a twentieth of the whole work, appears to have prompted the scribes of later manuscripts to give it a separate heading *Faṣl fi 'l-ma'rifa wa-'l-tawḥīd* (Section on gnosis and divine unity).⁷⁹ It is not immediately clear why these segments have been positioned here when they could have been filed into the appropriate biographies in the main body of the work. It may be the case that a special collection of segments related to the topic of *ma'rifa* had been maintained, and that it was decided to keep these segments separate from the biographies. It is however also possible that this section was added after the whole text had reached a closed form; it would therefore have been positioned at the end as an appendix, even though its component segments are actually appropriate for the biographies in the main body of the work. In this way, it would parallel the appendices at the end of certain biographies in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, and perhaps represent a final stage of entry of segments into the organic school text of Herat, which became known as 'Anṣārī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*.

Part Two

"You tell me that battles are reproduced. I do find something aesthetic, just as you said, in seeing beneath a modern battle the plan of an older one; I can't tell you how attractive the idea sounds. But then, does the genius of the commander count for nothing? Does he really do no more than apply the rules?"

(Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of things past*, Vol II, p.113)

Qushayrī's *Risāla*

I

Abū 'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) was born in the year 376, according to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, who claims that Qushayrī himself informed him directly of this date. It would imply that he lived for nearly ninety years.¹ The Khaṭīb also refers to the following visit by Qushayrī to Baghdad:

He came to us in the year 448. He transmitted hadiths in Baghdad and we wrote them down on his authority – he was trustworthy (*thiqa*). He was good at preaching and eloquent in instructing. He was educated in theology (*uṣūl*) according to the Ash'arite school, and in jurisprudence (*furū'*) according to the Shafi'ite school.

(al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, XI, 83.5–8)

It is perhaps a little surprising that, despite informing that Qushayrī was a trustworthy hadith transmitter, and a religious preacher who followed Ash'arite theology and Shafi'ite law, he does not indicate that Qushayrī was also a Sufi.² However, his contemporary the Sufi scholar, 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, includes a biography of Qushayrī in his *Kashf al-mahjūb* which presents him as a Sufi authority, whilst also acknowledging that he excelled in a wide range of intellectual disciplines.³

The earliest narrative of Qushayrī's life is found in *al-Siyāq li-Ta'rikh Naysābūr* of 'Abd al-Ghāfir b. Ismā'īl al-Fārisī (d.529/1134).⁴ The main events in Qushayrī's life, according to this

biography, are summarised as follows: he was born amongst the Arabs who had settled in Ustuwwa in Khurasan.⁵ On visiting Nishapur as a young man he attended a meeting led by Abū 'Alī 'l-Daqqāq (d. 406/1016 or 412/1021) and became his disciple. The latter instructed him to study the religious sciences; he proceeded to study jurisprudence under the Shafi'ite Muhammad b. Bakr al-Ṭūsī (d. 420/1029), and theology under the Ash'arite Abū Bakr b. Fūrak (d. 406/1015). Later he performed ḥajj with Abū Muḥammad al-Juwaynī (d. 438/1047) and Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), and together they obtained the authority to transmit hadiths by *samā'* (*sami'a . . . al-ḥadīth*) from the leading authorities in the Hijaz and Baghdad (presumably en route).⁶ Qushayrī compiled *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* and other works which were widely circulated.

All the later biographies of Qushayrī appear to be based on this 'skeleton' narrative. More details accumulated over time, especially regarding his death, his teachers and his written compositions. They include motifs which have already been encountered in the biographical traditions of Abū Yazīd and Junayd, including perseverance in worship in the final moments of life, and burial deeper in the ground than one's teacher.⁷

Twenty extant works have been attributed to Qushayrī, including both Sufi and (Ash'arite) theological works.⁸ It is mainly due to his scholarship that he is remembered as an important figure in the Sufi biographical tradition, and his most famous work, the *Risāla*, has proven to be one of the most widely read works in the history of Sufism.⁹

II

The *Risāla* is a combination of the two main genres of Sufi literature, namely the *ṭabaqāt* and manual genres.¹⁰ It can be classified as 'dual-generic', since it incorporates these two genres in the form of its main component sections.¹¹ In total, the *Risāla* consists of four sections which are demarcated by the author himself, using headings and introductions.¹² Biographies are included in the second section, which represents the *ṭabaqāt* genre (see Section III of this chapter), whilst the third and fourth sections, in combination, constitute the equivalent of a Sufi manual (see below). As Arthur Arberry has already observed, the

Risāla draws heavily on both Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* and Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj's Sufi manual, the *Luma'*, and yet it has managed to surpass them in popularity. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that most readers are familiar with Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* primarily through Qushayrī's use of it as a source for the *ṭabaqāt* section of his own work. This makes it all the more important to examine closely the ways in which Qushayrī selected and reworked material from that precursor for his own purposes.

Before turning attention to the *ṭabaqāt* section, it is necessary to appreciate the context in which it is embedded, by considering the nature of the other sections of the *Risāla*. The shortest section by far is the first section,¹³ on 'the doctrine (*i'tiqād*) of this sect (*tā'ifa*) in theological issues (*masā'il al-usūl*)', which immediately precedes the *ṭabaqāt* section. It reveals Qushayrī's allegiance to Ash'arism, since it serves to attribute to Sufism the theological doctrines of that school.¹⁴

The introduction of the terminology section of the *Risāla*, which follows immediately after the *ṭabaqāt* section, indicates a change in orientation towards a readership of Sufi practitioners (*min sālikī turuqihim wa-muttabi'ī sunnatihim*).¹⁵ It even suggests that the use of an exclusive terminology serves the purpose of obscuring the meaning of Sufi discourse from outsiders (*li-takūn ma'ānī alfāzihim mustabhama 'alā 'l-ajānib*).¹⁶ Such comments at this particular point in the *Risāla* suggest that the preceding sections (consisting of the *ṭabaqāt* and the short Ash'arite theology section) are designed for a wider audience including the uninitiated, in contrast to the subsequent Sufi manual, comprising the terminology and 'systematic' sections (see below).

A total of forty-eight Sufi terms are introduced in the twenty-seven chapters that make up the terminology section.¹⁷ Qushayrī's method is to combine his own explanations with utterances attributed to past Sufi authorities, as well as occasional citations of verses of the Qur'an and hadiths. The terminology section leads up to the systematic section which is introduced by means of the following short introduction:

We will now mention chapters (*abwāb*) explaining the stations (*maqāmāt*) that are the routes of the wayfarers, then, after that, chapters detailing the states (*ahwāl*) to the extent that God facilitates by his grace.

(R, 167.18–20)

The chapters (*abwāb*)¹⁸ that make up this section are here introduced as belonging to two consecutive groups, namely chapters on stations (*maqāmāt*) followed by chapters on states (*aḥwāl*). However, the actual topics covered by these chapters are more wide-ranging; they include topics, such as *samāʿ* (musical audition) and *aḥkāmuhum fī 'l-safar* (their (the Sufis') rules during travel), which can hardly be classified under either category. He appears to have chosen to divide his discussions of topics that were conventionally covered in the Sufi manual genre into two broad groups – the first constitutes his section on terminology, whilst the second constitutes the 'systematic' section, which encompasses, in addition to the 'stations' and 'states' of the mystic itinerary, discussions of selected Sufi customs and practices.

Although the demarcation between these two sections consists of no more than the short introduction presented above, a transition can be seen in the format of the (fifty-one) chapters that follow it, from that of the preceding terminology chapters. Qushayrī now invariably begins with a citation from the Qur'an, followed in turn by a prophetic hadith, his own comments and utterances attributed to Sufi authorities of the past.¹⁹

The final chapter of the *Risāla*, '[The Chapter of] advice to disciples (*al-waṣīyya li-'l-murīdīn*)', is not demarcated at all from the section which precedes it. In view of the fact that the systematic section includes a few 'miscellaneous' chapters in addition to those on stations and states, it should perhaps be no surprise that this final chapter of advice has usually been classified as its final member. However, since it fails to follow the same structural pattern as the preceding fifty-one chapters which make up the systematic section, it is perhaps better understood to be separate from them, as a form of appendix.²⁰

The introduction to the *Risāla* offers the date of the completion of its composition (*kataba*) as 437,²¹ whilst the postscript gives the date of the completion of its dictation (*imlā*) as 438.²² These dates therefore suggest that the *Risāla* was eventually dictated from a master copy that had been composed a year earlier. The overall consistency in style and method evident in this work indicate a relatively high degree of authorial control, and it seems reasonable to accept these dates as representing the completion of the work by Qushayrī, and its dictation a year later, respectively.

III

The *tabaqāt* section of the *Risāla* consists of an introduction, 83 biographies and a conclusion. The biographies are presented in a continuous sequence, beginning with Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d.162/778-9) and ending with Aḥmad b. 'Aṭā 'l-Rūdhbārī (d.369/980). Whilst there is an obvious chronological progression from the start of the sequence to the end, individual biographies are not listed in strict chronological order. 80 of the (83) biographies correspond to those found in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, the (103) biographies of which are grouped into 'generation' sections.²³ Moreover, in spite of the fact that the biographies in the *Risāla* are presented as a single sequence, rather than divided into generation sections, their order of presentation indicates the influence of the precursor. For example, all the biographies in the *Risāla* which correspond to Sulamī's first generation are grouped together at the start of the sequence, before the biography of Junayd. In the earlier work, his biography signals the start of the second generation section. In the *Risāla* too, it marks the point in the sequence, immediately after which follow those biographies which correspond to Sulamī's second generation section.²⁴ Similarly, the biographies of Jurayrī, Shiblī and Ibn A'rābī signal, within the continuous sequence, the 'starting-points' of biographies corresponding to Sulamī's third, fourth and fifth generations, respectively. In that work, their biographies are the first to be listed in the third, fourth and fifth generations. It should also be mentioned that many of the biographies in the *Risāla* are not only positioned in the sequence in accordance with their classification by Sulamī, but they are even juxtaposed in exactly the same order.²⁵ The degree of influence from Sulamī's generation system is so high that, without prior familiarity with that work, the criteria for ordering biographies in the *Risāla* would be indecipherable.

Only three biographies that are included in Qushayrī's *Risāla* do not have counterparts in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*. They are the biographies of Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī (d.165/781), Aḥmad al-Zaqqāq al-Kabīr (d.290-1/902-4) and Abū 'Ubayd al-Busrī (d.238/852). Despite the fact that biographies devoted to them are not found in the earlier work, each of them is mentioned there.²⁶ Therefore, it appears that none of these individuals were necessarily unknown to Sulamī, yet they did not merit a biography according to his criteria. Their importance was evidently greater to Qushayrī, whose work was compiled at least a quarter of a century later.

All three of the additional biographies have a factor in common: their first *isnād* names Sulamī, referred to as Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn, as the immediate source.²⁷ The presence of such *isnāds* at the start of these additional biographies has the effect of making them seem to be based on the authority of Sulamī, despite the fact that they are not found in his *Ṭabaqāt*. It facilitates their integration with the rest of the biographical section, the organisational framework of which has evidently been modelled on that work.

The biography of Busrī (d.238/852–3) is juxtaposed between those of Samnūn b. Ḥamza (d.ca 297/910) and Shāh al-Kirmānī (d.ca 300/912), Sufis of at least one generation later. This position is conspicuous since usually biographies of contemporaries tend to be juxtaposed in this work, rather than those of different generations. The reason for its position can be found in the introduction to the biography of Kirmānī, where it is stated that he followed Abū 'Ubayd al-Busrī.²⁸

Of the 103 biographies found in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, only 25 are omitted in the *Risāla*. Most of these are accounted for by the final members of each of Sulamī's five generations: the final four biographies from the second generation, the final two from the third, the final four from the fourth and the final seven from the fifth are all omitted.²⁹ This suggests that the earlier work was used systematically, in such a way that once enough biographies had been included from each of Sulamī's generations in turn, then the remainder were simply omitted.

Out of the remaining biographies to be omitted, that of Ḥallāj is the most significant. The omission of Ḥallāj is particularly curious since many segments about him are found in the other sections of this work.³⁰ This suggests that his omission was not merely for the sake of brevity. Since a decision was made to omit Ḥallāj from the *ṭabaqāt* section, whilst leaving segments about him in other sections of the *Risāla*, it implies that his inclusion would have conflicted with the aims particular to the *ṭabaqāt* section of the work.

Since the biographies in Qushayrī's *Risāla* correspond to those of Sulamī's work they cover the same period, from the eighth century to the late tenth century. As already observed, Sulamī provides an explanation for the fact that his biographies do not extend back as far as the time of the Prophet.³¹ Similarly, Qushayrī in the introduction to his biographical section links Sufis from the eighth century back to the time of the Prophet.

Be aware that the best of the Muslims after the apostle of God were not called, in their own time, by a title of distinction other than companionship of the apostle of God (*ṣuḥba*), since there was no virtue higher than that. Thus they were called the *ṣahāba* and when those of the second period took over from them, those who had associated with the *ṣahāba* were called the *tābi'ūn*, this being considered the most noble title. Then those who came after them were called the *atbā' al-tābi'īn*. Then the people were at variance and different ranks became discernible. The elite of the people amongst those who were preoccupied with religion were called the *zuhhād* (ascetics) and *'ubbād* (pietists). Then innovations emerged and challenges were made between the groups, each of them claiming that the *zuhhād* were amongst their number. The elite of the traditionalists (*khawāṣṣ ahl al-sunna*), who maintained their souls with God and safeguarded their hearts from the paths of heedlessness, alone possessed the name *taṣawwuf* (Sufism). This name became well-known for these great individuals by 200 A.H. In this section we will mention the names of a group of the shaykhs of this sect from the first generation until the time of the later ones amongst them, and briefly mention their behaviour and sayings which contain an indication of their principles and their customs, God willing.

(R, 34.1–8)

Qushayrī links Sufism back to the time of the Prophet by asserting that the representatives of this tradition were ultimately his successors. They are identified as the elite religious devotees from amongst the traditionalists, who succeeded the three generations of the 'pious predecessors' (the *ṣahāba*, *tābi'ūn* and *atbā' al-tābi'īn*), as well as the 'original' *zuhhād* and *'ubbād*. This model is an elaboration of that provided by Sulamī in the introduction to his *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, where he states that the first Sufis were the successors of the pious predecessors. If Qushayrī's version differs, it is because of his concern to justify the use of different titles in different periods. The term *taṣawwuf* is said to have been well-known only by the third century. Before this period, the elite religious devotees, that is, the predecessors of the Sufis, had apparently been called *zuhhād* and *'ubbād*, but eventually each of the competing groups that emerged claimed to represent the *zuhhād*, creating the need for the new name, *taṣawwuf*.

Qushayrī, by referring to the differences in opinion and challenges between competing groups, as well as the beginning of innovations, shows greater concern than his predecessor to distinguish Sufism from competing traditions. He defines the first Sufis as an elite amongst traditionalists who were focused completely on God. This differs significantly from Sulamī's definition of Sufis as 'those who have mystical states (*ahwāl*) and speak about unicity (*tafrīd*), the truths of unity (*tawhīd*) and the application of the methods of detachment (*tajrīd*)'.³² It is a sign that Qushayrī wished to re-orientate the definition of the identity of Sufis in the *ṭabaqāt* section of his *Risāla*, classifying them as pious traditionalists rather than mystics.

It is stated in the above passage that the *ṭabaqāt* section will include Sufis 'from the first generation (*ṭabaqa*) until the time of the later ones'. It actually begins with those who were classified as members of Sulamī's first generation of Sufis, whilst it culminates with the latter's fifth generation. Qushayrī, who lived a generation later than Sulamī, also includes, after the final biography, the following list of Sufi contemporaries:

The shaykhs whom we have reached and with whom we are contemporaries, even if we could not meet them, such as, the master and witness, the spokesman of his time who was unique in his era Abū 'Alī 'l-Ḥasan b. al-Daqqāq, Shaykh Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, who was unique in his time, Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Jahḍam who lived in Mecca, Shaykh Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Qaṣṣāb³³ in Ṭabaristān, and Aḥmad al-Aswad in Dīnawar, Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Ṣayrafī in Nishapur, Abū Sahl al-Khashshāb al-Kabīr also in Nishapur, Maṣṣūr b. Khalaf al-Maghribī, Abū Sa'd al-Mālīnī, Abū Ṭāhir al-Khūzandī and others. If we had occupied ourselves with mentioning them and detailing their characteristics we would have departed from the aim of conciseness.

(R, 120.1-8)

The above list of ten Sufis serves as an extension of the preceding sequence of biographies. It is explained that biographies had not been included for them in that sequence only due to a concern for conciseness. Nonetheless, the provision of this list at this point implies that they are Qushayrī's selected successors of the earlier generations of Sufis, from amongst his own immediate predecessors.

Sulamī's generation system culminates with his own teachers and predecessors in Sufi scholarship in the form of his fifth generation section. Similarly the aforementioned extension of the sequence of biographies in Qushayrī's *ṭabaqāt* section indicates his own preferences and allegiances. The predominance of Khurasanians is striking. Moreover, just as Sulamī's fifth generation is hierarchical, in that more space is devoted to the biographies placed at the head, so too is Qushayrī's final list, in that the first two individuals to be named, Daqqāq and Sulamī, are the only ones afforded glorious epithets. Qushayrī's own teacher in Sufism and his predecessor in Sufi scholarship are thus presented as the most important members of the generation immediately preceding his own. Daqqāq is the most frequently quoted Sufi in the *Risāla*, whilst Sulamī is the most frequently named immediate source of segments in the work (as well as the provider of the model for the *ṭabaqāt* section as a whole). Thus, in the context of the *Risāla* itself, this *ṭabaqāt* section serves as an *isnād* for the *matn* of the Sufi manual, which makes up the larger part of the work.

IV

The organisational framework of the *ṭabaqāt* section of Qushayrī's *Risāla* provides the most conspicuous evidence of his heavy reliance on Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*. This is found not only in the selection and order of presentation of biographies, but also in the (demarcatory) introductions of the individual biographies. To illustrate this point, the introduction of the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Risāla* is presented below:

Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. 'Īsā 'l-Bastāmī. His grandfather was a Magian who converted to Islam. They were three brothers: Ādam, Ṭayfūr and 'Alī. All of them were pious ascetics and Abū Yazīd was the greatest of them with regards to mystical state. It is said that he died in the year 261. It is also said that it was 234.

(R, 55.1-5)

The introduction of the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Risāla* presents, in the same order, most of the information found in the corresponding introduction of Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*.³⁴ However, it is more concise, in keeping with the *ṭabaqāt* section as a whole; it

omits the *isnāds* on the authority of which alternative dates for Abū Yazīd's death are originally given, and it offers the *nisha* 'al-Bastāmī', facilitating the omission of a statement about the subject's place of origin. Qushayrī has also omitted, apparently for the sake of brevity, the Persian name of Abū Yazīd's grandfather, who is said to have converted from Zoroastrianism.

The statement characterising Abū Yazīd and his brothers together in the introduction of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* (*wa-kulluhum kānū zuhhādan wa-'ubbādan wa-arbāb al-aḥwāl*) has been reworked in the *Risāla*, where it reads: *wa-kāna Abū Yazīd ajallahum ḥālan*. This is an improvement on the earlier version which is anomalous for characterising its subject only alongside his brothers.

The introduction of the biography of Junayd in Qushayrī's *Risāla*, which is presented below, shows further signs of reworking.

Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd b. Muḥammad is the chief of this sect and their leader (*sayyid ḥādhihi 'l-tā'ifa wa-imāmuhum*). His origins are from Nihavand and the place of his birth and upbringing is Iraq. His father used to sell glassware and so he was called *al-qawārīrī* 'the glass trader'. He was a jurist according to the school of Abū Thawr, and he used to give fatwas in his circle, with him present, when he was twenty years old. He associated with his maternal uncle al-Sarī and al-Hārith al-Muḥāsibī and Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'l-Qaṣṣāb. He died in the year 297.

(R, 70.15–71.3)

Similar to the introduction of the biography of Abū Yazīd, the introduction of the biography of Junayd in the *Risāla* is a more concise version of its earlier counterpart.³⁵ Each of the items of information that it contains appears to be derived from the earlier version,³⁶ but some of them have been reworked significantly. First of all, the introduction in the *Risāla* begins with the statement that Junayd is the leader of the Sufis. This is based on the more modest statement towards the end of the earlier version which informs that Junayd was one of their leaders. Both the reworking of this statement and the change of its position to the start suggest that Junayd's supreme position amongst Sufis had become firmly established by Qushayrī's time. (Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* itself would have played a part in this process).

The statement in the *Tabaqāt* which serves to attribute authority in jurisprudence to Junayd also appears to have been reworked in

the *Risāla*: it has been extended by the addition of two further details about Junayd's delivery of fatwas. The addition of *bi-hadratih* clarifies that Junayd gave fatwas with the authority of Abū Thawr, since it affirms that the latter was present at the time; the addition of *wa-huwa 'bn 'ashrīn sana* emphasises the precocious nature of Junayd's acquisition of authority in jurisprudence – apparently, he was only twenty years old at the time.

The introductions of the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd are representative of the vast majority of the introductions of biographies in the *Risāla*, in that they demonstrate that Qushayrī relied heavily on Sulamī's work; he produced more concise versions, which were reworked according to his own preferences. The reworkings in these introductions serve to embellish and emphasise the credentials of their respective subjects; Abū Yazīd is now distinguished from his brothers as being the greatest mystic out of the three, whilst Junayd is no longer introduced as merely one of the Sufi leaders, but rather the leader of this sect, *sayyid ḥādhihi 'l-tā'ifa*. Moreover, he was apparently so precocious as a jurist that he merited the authority to give fatwas in the presence of Abū Thawr at a relatively young age.

In the next section of this chapter, attention will be turned from the organisational framework to the component segments of material of the biographies, in order to assess accurately the nature and extent of the influence of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* (and other earlier works) on the *Risāla*. Especially in view of the deceptive nature of the influence of that work on the Persian *Tabaqāt*, it is necessary to appreciate the relationship between the 'building-block' segments of the two works, as well as their 'architecture'.

V

Out of the nine discrete segments which make up the body of the biography of Abū Yazīd, five are demarcated by an *isnād*,³⁷ one by the formula *wa-bi-ḥādhihi 'l-isnād* ('also on the authority of the (preceding) *isnād*'),³⁸ one by the mention of the first two transmitters only,³⁹ and the remaining segments by the simple conjunction *wa*.⁴⁰ None of them indicate that a written source has been used, even though many of them are found in earlier works. For instance, the first two segments are virtually identical to corresponding segments in Sulamī's biography of Abū Yazīd.⁴¹ In

fact, it is only their *isnāds* that differ, and merely by the mention in both of Qushayrī's *isnāds* of 'Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn' (Sulamī) as the immediate source (added to the end of the same *isnāds* that are found in the latter's own work).⁴² Oral transmission from Sulamī is thus implied, even though the segments are found in both works without any discrepancy.

The first segment describes Abū Yazīd's method of Sufism as one of self denial, whilst the second attributes to him a concern for scholastic knowledge and its application.⁴³ In the latter, Abū Yazīd expresses his appreciation for the accepted difference of opinion amongst the scholars (*ikhtilāf al-ʿulamāʾ*).⁴⁴ These segments have been selected from the many available in the earlier work, which includes pithy apophthegms and witty dismissals of competing types of religious devotees. Their selection signals that Qushayrī prefers to depict Abū Yazīd as a pietist who appreciated the activity of religious scholars, and they have even attracted a gloss to underline this message – it states that 'Abū Yazīd did not depart from this world until he had memorised the entire Qur'an'.⁴⁵

There are no further segments in the biography of Abū Yazīd that are also found in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, suggesting that the latter work was used as the starting basis for the compilation of the biography; that is, it was drawn upon for the introduction and the first two segments, after which further sources were used.⁴⁶

Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* is only the first of three major Sufi works that appear to have been used as sources for the biography of Abū Yazīd. The third and fourth segments, for instance, are variants of two juxtaposed segments in the chapter on 'what has been mentioned about the (Sufi) shaykhs regarding their following (*ittibāʿ*) of the apostle of God' of Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj's (d.378/988) *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*. These segments are presented below:

- 3 Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī related to us, saying that Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj related to him, saying that he heard Tayfūr al-Baṣṭāmī say that he heard the one known as 'Ammī al-Baṣṭāmī say that he heard his father say that Abū Yazīd said to him, Let us go to see this man who has made himself famous for proximity to God. He was a sought after man, famous for asceticism (*zuhd*), so we went to him. When he came out of his house and entered the mosque he spat towards the *qibla* (direction of prayer), and so Abū Yazīd

turned away and did not greet him, saying, This is unfaithful to one of the manners (*ādāb*) of the apostle of God, so how can he be faithful about what he is claiming?

- 4 On the authority of this *isnād* Abū Yazīd said, I intended to ask God to spare me from the need for the provision of food and women, then I said, How can it be permitted for me to ask God for this when the apostle of God did not ask him for it? So I did not ask him. Then God spared me from the need for the provision of women, such that I do not care whether a woman meets me or a wall!

(R, 55.15–24)⁴⁷

Qushayrī's variants are offered on the authority of the same *isnād*, just like the juxtaposed pair in the *Lumaʿ*.⁴⁸ They appear to have been obtained from Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, even though only oral transmission (via an intermediary) is implied by their *isnāds*. The failure to acknowledge the written source is typical for the *Risāla*, which has already been observed to owe a considerable debt to both Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* and Sarrāj's *Lumaʿ*.⁴⁹

In Segment 3, the claim to sainthood of one who fails to follow an aspect of the Prophet's behaviour is rejected. In Segment 4, Abū Yazīd admits that he had wished to go beyond the normative example of the Prophet in asceticism, but then thought better of it, and was consequently rewarded by the granting of his original wish. This pair are complementary segments; the former implies that one must not violate any aspect of the Prophet's behaviour, whilst the latter implies that it is better to confine oneself to following the Prophet's example than to undergo extra self-denial. Both segments function to attribute to Abū Yazīd the opinion that the correct religious path is following the *sunna* (normative example) of the Prophet, in favour over both falling short and striving beyond it.

The biography of Abū Yazīd also includes three segments that are variants of corresponding segments in the *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*. Two of them are juxtaposed in both works (in reverse order).⁵⁰ The first of these segments is presented below, followed by its variant in the earlier work:

- R Abū Yazīd was asked, What was the most difficult (*ashadd*) thing you encountered on God's path? He said, It is not possible to describe it. Then he was asked, What was the

easiest (*ahwan*)⁵¹ thing that your carnal soul (*nafs*) encountered from you? He said, As for this, yes [it can be described]: I summoned it to perform an act of obedience (*tā'a*) and it did not accede to my request so I denied it water for a year.
(R, 56.10-12)

H I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan say that he heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Marwazī say that he heard Abū Yazīd's wife say that she heard Abū Yazīd say, I urged my carnal soul (*nafs*) to go to God, but it refused me and was stubborn, so I left it behind and proceeded to God (*fa-taraktuhā wa-madaytu ilā 'llāh*).
(H, X, 36.21-3)

In both variants, Abū Yazīd relates that he had asked something of his carnal soul (*nafs*), but, since it disobeyed him, he punished it. However, they specify different tasks asked of the carnal soul as well as the eventual punishments for disobedience. These details are surely not insignificant. In the *Hilya* Abū Yazīd is portrayed as a mystic who left behind his carnal soul for 'refusing to go to God', and proceeded without it (*fa-taraktuhā wa-madaytu ilā 'llāh*). In the *Risāla*, however, Abū Yazīd is portrayed as a self-denying pietist who 'deprived his carnal soul of water for a year' because it had not fulfilled the requested act of obedience (*tā'a*). This transformation of a segment from one which portrays Abū Yazīd as a mystic to one that portrays him as a pietist is paralleled in another of the *Risāla*'s variants of *Hilya* material, which is presented below:

R Abū Yazīd said, For thirty years I prayed with the belief in myself, at every ritual prayer that I prayed, that I was like a Magian wanting to cut off my girdle (*ka-annī mājūsī urīdu an aqṭī'a zunnārī*).
(R, 56.13-14)

H [Abū Yazīd] said, If you stand before God, Make yourself like a Magian wanting to cut off the girdle in front of Him (*ka-annak mājūsī turīdu an taqṭī'a 'l-zunnār*).
(H, X, 40.18-19)

These variants both employ the same imagery which is expressed in their respective clauses *ka-annī mājūsī urīdu an aqṭī'a zunnārī*/*ka-annak mājūsī turīdu an taqṭī'a al-zunnār*. In the *Hilya* this imagery is presented as part of an instruction on how to behave in God's presence, whilst in the *Risāla* it represents Abū Yazīd's own

thoughts during ritual prayer. Thus, the variant in the *Hilya* is an instruction to fellow mystics seeking proximity to God, whilst the use of the context of ritual prayer in the *Risāla* depicts Abū Yazīd as a pietist, who wishes to perfect his attitude during ritual worship.

The remaining two segments in the biography of Abū Yazīd do not appear to have been obtained from any of the major Sufi works. One of them is placed at the very end of the biography, immediately after the variants of material in the *Hilya*. In fact, it seems to be derived from the same narrative motif as a segment in the biography of Abū Yazīd in that work (feeling unworthy to mention God's name: *fa-'htashamtu an adhkurah/ijlālan li-'llāh an adhkurah*).⁵²

The other 'newly-introduced' segment has been juxtaposed immediately after the aforementioned segment which suggests that to follow the prophetic *sunna* is better than excessive self-denial. It is thematically related to that segment, in that Abū Yazīd belittles asceticism (*laysa li-'l-zuhd manzila*), and proceeds to relate his own progress towards proximity to God, which was only made possible through his grace.⁵³

The body of the biography of Junayd in Qushayrī's *Risāla* consists of fourteen juxtaposed discrete segments. Six of them are demarcated by *ismāds*,⁵⁴ four by the naming of the immediate source only,⁵⁵ and four by the simple conjunction *wa*.⁵⁶ The first six segments of the body of this biography are also found in the corresponding biography of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*,⁵⁷ confirming the impression given by the biography of Abū Yazīd, that the precursor was used as the starting-point for the biographies in the *Risāla*.

The biography of Junayd also includes variants of segments that are found in the *Hilya* and the *Luma'*, beginning immediately with its seventh segment, which is presented below alongside its earlier variant:

R Junayd said, Whoever does not memorise the Qur'an and write down hadiths should not be followed as a model in this matter (Sufism) because our knowledge is restricted by the book and the *sunna* (*'ilmunā hādhā muqayyad bi-'l-kitāb wa-'l-sunna*).
(R, 72.5-6)

H I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Hārūn b. Muḥammad and Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Mufīd both say that they

heard Abū 'l-Qāsim Junayd b. Muḥammad say, more than once, Our knowledge is restricted by the book and the *sunna* ('ilmunā madbūt al-kitāb wa-'l-sunna). Whoever does not memorise the Qur'an, write down hadith and practise jurisprudence should not be followed as a model.

(H, X, 255.12-15)

The two statements that make up the variant in the *Hilya* are conjoined in reverse order in the *Risāla*. Otherwise they are virtually identical, the main discrepancy being the use of the participle *muqayyad* instead of *madbūt*, which, in this context, is synonymous. What is especially interesting about the inclusion of this segment in the *Risāla* is the fact that it is followed immediately by further variants, the first of which is presented below:

R I heard Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn say that he heard Abū Naṣr al-Iṣbahānī say that he heard Abū 'Alī 'l-Rūdhbārī⁵⁸ quote Junayd, saying, This way of ours is bound by the principles of the book and the *sunna* (*madhhabunā hādihā muqayyad bi-uṣūl al-kitāb wa-'l-sunna*).

(R, 72.7-8)

This variant of the immediately preceding segment differs by specifying that the 'way' which Junayd represents, rather than 'the knowledge', is bound by the principles of Muslim revelation, but nonetheless both presumably refer to Sufism.⁵⁹ The next segment in the biography, which is the final member of this sequence of juxtaposed variants, is presented below. It is a close variant of a segment provided in the aforementioned chapter on the Sufis' emulation of the Prophet in Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Luma'*, which is also presented below.

R Junayd said, This knowledge of ours is built out of the hadith of the apostle of God ('ilmunā hādihā mushayyad bi-ḥadīth rasūl Allāh).

(R, 72.9)

L The shaykh [Sarrāj] said that he heard 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. 'Ulwān say that he heard Junayd say, This knowledge of ours is interwoven with the hadith of the apostle of God ('ilmunā hādihā mushtabik bi-ḥadīth rasūl Allāh).

(L, 103.9-11)

Qushayrī's variant differs from that of Sarrāj only by its use of *mushayyad bi-* (built out of) rather than *mushtabik bi-* (interwoven with). The former may imply that prophetic hadith is the substance of Junayd's knowledge, whilst the latter suggests that his knowledge is interwoven in a close relationship with hadith. The difference is perhaps negligible. What is more significant is the fact that this is the only segment in the biography of Junayd which appears to have been derived from Sarrāj's *Luma'*, and, just as in the case of the biography of Bastāmī, it is found originally in the chapter of the latter work which is concerned specifically with emulation of the Prophet.

The remaining segments in the biography of Junayd do not appear in any of the major precursors to the *Risāla*. Amongst them is a further example of an anecdotal topos that has been encountered twice already in the biographical tradition of Junayd.⁶⁰ In this particular example, Ibn Surayj, the jurist of Baghdad, indicates his approval and appreciation of Junayd by stating that his own fine speech (*kalām ḥasan*) about jurisprudence was acquired thanks to discussions with Junayd (*hādihā bi-barakat mujālasat Abī 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd*).⁶¹

There are also two segments which depict Junayd as someone who engaged in simple acts of piety and devotion, even after having attained a lofty status. In the first of these, Junayd responds to an enquiry about how he acquired gnosis (*ma'rifa*), by explaining that he sat 'before God' for thirty years on a step in his house (*min julisī thalāthīn sana tahta tilka 'l-daraja wa-awma'a ilā daraja fī dārih*).⁶² The second example presents Junayd as responding to an enquirer who is baffled by the fact that he still uses prayer-beads, even after having reached a lofty status (*anta ma'a sharafik ta'khudh biyadik subha?*), by declaring that he will not abandon a method that has helped him to reach proximity to God (*ṭarīq bih waṣaltu ilā rabbī lā ufāriquh*).⁶³ These two segments serve to reassure that Junayd was not merely a scholar of Sufism, but also someone who undertook the practical disciplines of the tradition and never regarded himself above maintaining the simplest acts of devotion, despite being known as 'the chief of the gnostics'.

The penultimate segment in this biography also functions to attribute pious qualities to Junayd. Daqqāq relates that every day Junayd would go to his stall, perform 400 units of ritual prayer, and then return home.⁶⁴ This narrative functions to distance Junayd from the activity of trade and its potential corrupting effect. It is

not denied that Junayd was a merchant (his *nisba* indicates this plainly enough), but the reader is given the impression that he spent all of his time at the stall in worship. A segment with the same motif is found in the biography of Junayd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, where it is even alleged that he never managed to sell anything.⁶⁵

The final segment in this biography is about Junayd's death. It is also found in Abū Nu'aym's *Hilya* with exactly the same text, but a different *isnād*.⁶⁶ It was presumably positioned here at the end of the biography by intention, because of the event that it describes, in preference to a position next to this biography's other variant of a segment in the *Hilya*.⁶⁷

To recapitulate, the fact that the introductions of Qushayrī's biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd and the first segments of their bodies correspond closely to material in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* suggests that the latter work has been used systematically as their foundation; Qushayrī begins his biographies by selecting from corresponding material in Sulamī's work, and then proceeds to add material, in turn, from other written and oral sources. Both of these biographies also contain segments that are found in the corresponding biographies of the *Hilya*, as well as segments that are variants of those found in Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Luma'*.

The biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd in the *Risāla* also contain segments that do not appear to be variants of material found in earlier written works. They are positioned either immediately after a thematically associated variant segment, or at the end of the biography. This overall pattern confirms that the first stage of the compilation of the biographies consisted of obtaining material from the aforementioned written sources, beginning with Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. This was 'topped up' by the addition of further segments that are not found in any of the written sources.

As it is evident that Qushayrī based his biographies on material already provided in earlier works, the nature of the material he has selected from what was available in those works becomes all the more significant. Firstly, Qushayrī has not included here any of the provocative apophthegms, boastful autobiographical reports and witty dismissals of ascetics and pietists, which are attributed to Abū Yazīd in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* and Abū Nu'aym's *Hilya*. Moreover none of the *shatḥiyyāt* (ecstatic utterances) attributed to Abū Yazīd are

included, despite the fact that Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Luma'* contains a section specifically devoted to them.⁶⁸ The differences between Qushayrī's segments about Abū Yazīd and their variants in the earlier works is also instructive. The former are consistently less mystical and have been reworked with the effect of emphasising Abū Yazīd's piety and self-denial.

The body of the biography of Junayd includes three juxtaposed variants of an utterance about the importance of the Qur'an and the *sunna* for Sufism. There are also two segments which contribute to the image of Junayd as someone who maintained the practice of conventional acts of worship and good deeds, regardless of his own status in Sufism.⁶⁹ The emphasis on these issues in the biography of Junayd confirms the indications observed in that of Abū Yazīd, namely that Qushayrī's aim is to emphasise that Sufis are pious, traditionalist Muslims. He achieves this by omitting the more mystical segments about these individuals that are available to him, and toning down the ones that he uses. Qushayrī does not re-create his subjects as individuals without any mystical characteristics. Rather he blends together segments that describe them as mystics with a high concentration of those that confirm their piety and traditionalism.

VI

The *ṭabaqāt* section is not the only section of the *Risāla* where one can find segments about Abū Yazīd and Junayd, not to mention the other Sufis included there. This is because all of the sections of the *Risāla*, to varying degrees, are made up of segments about past Sufi authorities. The systematic section is of particular interest in this regard, for the basic unit of its chapters is the discrete segment, conveying the opinions and actions of past Sufis which are relevant to the theme in question. In the light of this, the mere provision of chapters on topics such as *samā'* (musical audition)⁷⁰ and *karāmāt* (miracles)⁷¹ indicates immediately that the parameters of the definition of Sufism are significantly more accommodating in the systematic section than in the *ṭabaqāt* section; both sections are made up of discrete segments about virtually the same set of authorities,⁷² but contentious topics are accommodated only within the systematic section. A comparison of the material provided about Abū Yazīd and Junayd within their biographies

with that provided in the systematic section may begin to elucidate the nature of the relationship between these two sections.

The systematic section contains the following variant of a segment already encountered in the biography of Abū Yazīd,⁷³ which employs the 'severance of the girdle' motif:

I heard Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn say that he heard Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ja'far say that he heard al-Ḥusayn b. 'Allūya say that Abū Yazīd said, For twelve years I was the blacksmith of my carnal soul, and then for five years I was the mirror of my heart. For a year I gazed at what was between the two, and there appeared a girdle (*zunnār*) around my waist. Then for twelve years I worked at severing it (*qat*'), and I gazed at it again, and there appeared a girdle around my inner being (*bāṭin*). For five years I worked at severing it, wondering how I could cut it off, and it was disclosed to me – I gazed at mankind and saw them as dead, so I pronounced four times over them, *Allāhu akbar!*⁷⁴

(R, 177.19–178.4)

It has already been noted that the variant provided in the *Risāla*'s biography of Abū Yazīd has a variant in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'* which is more mystical in content.⁷⁵ The provision of the above variant in the systematic section corroborates the impression that, for the specific purposes of his biography Qushayrī preferred the variant which emphasises his pious attitude during ritual prayer, for it constitutes in itself evidence that he had alternative variants. In fact, the above segment belonging to the systematic section is provided in the chapter on *mujāhada* (religious striving), for which the variant provided in the biography of Abū Yazīd would have been equally appropriate.⁷⁶

The systematic section also includes variants of segments which are frequently provided in earlier works that have been used as sources for the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Risāla*, but are not included in that biography in any guise. For instance, consider the following example, which is a variant of a segment that is provided in the *Hilya*'s biography of Abū Yazīd:

R Abū Yazīd said, God has certain worshippers (*'ubbād*) whom, if he were to veil them in heaven from vision of him, would appeal for deliverance from heaven just as the inhabitants of hell appeal for deliverance from hell (*law*

hajabahum fi 'l-janna 'an ru'yatih la-'staghāthū min al-janna kamā yastaghāth ahl al-nār min al-nār).

(R, 460.16–17)

H [Abū Yazīd] said, God has an elite group of worshippers (*'ubbād*) whom, if he were to veil them in heaven from vision of him, would appeal to leave heaven just as the inhabitants of hell appeal to leave hell (*law hajabahum fi 'l-janna 'an ru'yatih la-'staghāthū bi-'l-khurūj min al-janna kamā yastaghāth ahl al-nār bi-'l-khurūj min al-nār*).

(H, X, 34.14–17)

The above segment in the chapter on *shawq* (yearning) is a close variant of the segment provided in the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Hilya*. These variants both imply that Abū Yazīd identifies with the uncompromising elite, whose goal is vision of God, and who lack any interest in the rewards of heaven which ordinary Muslims anticipate. In fact, two further variants of this segment are provided in the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Hilya*,⁷⁷ but none of them has been selected for his biography in the *Risāla*; a variant, however, is reserved exclusively for the systematic section of this work, perhaps because it was considered too controversial to be included in the *tabaqāt* section.

Another type of utterance that is found in earlier biographies of Abū Yazīd, but not in that given by Qushayrī, is the witty assertion of the inferiority of ascetics in relation to gnostics. Such a segment is found in the systematic section of the *Risāla*.

Abū Yazīd said, The gnostic flies whilst the ascetic walks (*al-'arif tayyār wa-'l-zāhid sayyār*).

(R, 441.22)

This utterance parallels those attributed to Abū Yazīd in earlier sources, such as the following example from Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*.

Abū Yazīd said, The gnostic's concern is what he hopes for, while the ascetic's concern is what he eats.

(TABS, 66.11–67.1)

Although this kind of utterance is conspicuously absent from the *Risāla*'s biography of Abū Yazīd when it is compared with the earlier biographies that have been used as a source, the provision of

the above variant in the systematic section indicates that Qushayrī had examples available, if he had wished to include them. Its arrogant tone may have been considered inappropriate for the biography.

As already mentioned, the segments contained in Qushayrī's biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd which are variants of segments found in Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Luma'* are all found in a specific (36-line) chapter of the earlier work, on 'what has been mentioned about the Sufi shaykhs regarding their emulation of the apostle of God and their expertise in that'. However the systematic section of the *Risāla*, which is influenced more by the *Luma'* than any other previous work, contains many variants of segments that are found in other chapters of that work. These include two juxtaposed segments about Junayd for the chapter on *samā'*.⁷⁸ The *Luma'* would have been an obvious source for the compilation of a chapter on *samā'*, and indeed it appears to serve as its foundation,⁷⁹ in much the same way as Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* serves as the foundation for most of the biographies of the *ṭabaqāt* section. Qushayrī's decision to include in his biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd segments from the *Luma'* selected only from the chapter specifically about the Sufis' emulation of the Prophet suggests that this chapter may similarly have been considered the obvious source for segments that are appropriate for the particular function of his biographies.

The biography of Junayd in the *Risāla* depicts him as someone who advocated that Sufi practice should be in harmony with theoretical knowledge, and that adept Sufis should not abandon the discipline they undertook as novices. This makes it all the more conspicuous that the systematic section of the *Risāla* should contain material that qualifies (perhaps even contradicts) this image, including the first of the following two juxtaposed segments at the culmination of the chapter on *irāda* (desire/discipleship).

- 1 Junayd was asked about the novice (*murād*) and the adept Sufi (*murād*),⁸⁰ and he replied, The novice is controlled by the rule of scholastic knowledge (*siyāsāt al-ilm*), while the adept is controlled by the protection of the Truth (*nī'āyat al-haqq*), because the novice walks (*yasīr*) while the adept flies (*yafīr*). When will the one who walks catch up with the one who flies?

- 2 It is said that Dhū 'l-Nūn sent a man to Abū Yazīd, instructing him, Ask him until when will the sleep and repose continue – the caravan has already departed! Abū Yazīd replied, Tell my brother Dhū 'l-Nūn, the real man is the one who sleeps all night, then wakes up at the destination before the caravan [has reached it]! Dhū 'l-Nūn responded, Bravo! We, in our present state, cannot match this.⁸¹

(R, 310.17–19)

This utterance attributed to Junayd implies that adept Sufis are no longer governed by the same restrictions as novices; they are protected directly by God. Similarly, the subsequent narrative about Abū Yazīd implies that he can afford to rest with the reassurance that someone in his state can reach the furthest goals regardless.

The above examples show that the segments included in the *Risāla*'s biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd represent a restricted selection from the wider range available to Qushayrī. Further segments about the same individuals are provided in other parts of the work, displaying tangible differences to those that have been included in their respective biographies. The biographies tend to contain the less mystical variants and those that are less controversial.

The discrepancy in the selection criteria used for the compilation of the different sections of the *Risāla* is not restricted to the level of the segment alone. It has already been pointed out that the biography of Ḥallāj is the longest of those found in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, not to be included in Qushayrī's *Risāla*. The significance of this omission is further emphasised by the fact that many segments about Ḥallāj are found in the other sections of the *Risāla*. In fact, there are seventeen in the systematic section alone.⁸² This seems to confirm that Ḥallāj was considered inappropriate for inclusion in the *ṭabaqāt* section of the *Risāla*, whilst at the same time he was considered important enough to be mentioned in its systematic section.

It is worth considering what the differences are between the context of a biography and the context of a thematic chapter, in order to appreciate the factors behind Qushayrī's selection criteria. Biographies by definition put individuals 'under the spotlight'. The subject is the focus of attention because all of the material in

the biography, which takes the form of an assemblage of discrete segments, is about him. In contrast, while each chapter in the systematic section is also made up of discrete segments of material, a variety of individuals are quoted within them; the focus is the theme of the chapter, and so the opinions of a variety of authorities on that particular topic are embedded amongst each other. Moreover, thematic chapters in the *Risāla* begin with citations from the texts of Muslim revelation (Qur'an and Hadith), followed by Qushayrī's own introduction to the topic. The segments that follow are then arranged so as to develop the elaboration of the topic under discussion, facilitated by further comments by Qushayrī at appropriate points. If the above passage is considered as an example, one observes that it forms the culmination of the chapter on *irāda* (desire), by which point the discussion had been directed towards the consideration of the terms *murīd* (novice Sufi) and *murād* (adept Sufi). The way to these culminating segments had been paved effectively, so as to accommodate the contentious climax.

The functions of the *ṭabaqāt* section entail the widening of the acceptability of Sufis and the structuring of a harmony between traditionalist Islam and Sufism. This is achieved by characterising Sufism in the *ṭabaqāt* section by piety, humility and religious discipline. The omission of the biography of Ḥallāj appears to have been part of the effort to fulfil this objective. The inclusion in the systematic section of several segments about Ḥallāj highlights the discrepancies between the two sections. Those segments do not make him the focus of discussion, as they would have done if they had been used to form a biography. Moreover, when embedded amongst the opinions of other Sufi authorities, as well as citations from Muslim revelation, this material is more readily acceptable.

VII

The agenda that has been observed by the analysis of the biographies in the *Risāla* is not actually a hidden one. The aims of his *ṭabaqāt* section are elaborated in its conclusion.

The purpose of mentioning them in this place is to indicate that they are unanimous about the veneration of the shariah (*ta'zīm al-sharī'a*), [that they] are characterised by travelling

the paths of religious discipline (*ṭuruq al-riyāda*), and persist in following the *sunna* without abandoning any religious customs (*ādāb al-diyāna*); [that they] agree that whoever abandons pious deeds and striving and does not build his affair on the foundation of piety (*wara'*) and righteousness (*taqwā*) is being insincere to God about what he is claiming.

(R, 119.12–16)

In the above passage, Qushayrī acknowledges that he has provided his biographies for a particular end. The final two statements suggest further that he is defining the identity of Sufis polemically against false claimants who do not possess the preceding list of required qualities. Similar sentiments are also expressed in the introduction to the *Risāla* where he states that Sufism in his time had become virtually extinct;⁸³ apparently only the 'pretenders' to Sufism had remained. The *Risāla* presents itself as an attempt to remedy this situation by highlighting the characteristics of the 'real' Sufis of the past. Although such comments are conventional methods of exhortation in the introductions of religious works, the analysis of the biographies of the *Risāla* certainly confirms that an effort has been made to redefine the identity of Sufism. Moreover, this re-orientation is new and relevant to Qushayrī's own experience as a traditionalist Ash'arite/Shafi'ite.

The discrepancy between the images presented of Sufis in the different sections of the *Risāla* suggests that Qushayrī's endeavour was not straightforward. It has been observed that Section One, the theology section of the *Risāla*, attributes Ash'arite opinions to Sufis. Similarly, Section Two, the *ṭabaqāt* section, presents Sufis in a more acceptable light to traditionalists and jurists by attributing to them the aforementioned characteristics. At the beginning of the terminology section, however, Qushayrī states that it is written for the practising Sufi,⁸⁴ thus signalling a departure from the reorientation of the definition of the identity of the Sufi community to the exposition of Sufi theory within significantly wider parameters. The first two sections may be seen as a preparation for the main body of the text, which follows. In relation to the subsequent Sufi manual, the *ṭabaqāt* section can be considered to function like the *isnād* in relation to its *matn*.

Qushayrī has compiled a work in which the *ṭabaqāt* and manual genres function in tandem to embed Sufism further within the mainstream of Sunni Islam, whilst maintaining generous limits of

Qushayrī's *Risāla*

acceptability. His method is derived from a mastery of the conventions of the two genres and the functions to which each of them lends itself. He manipulates carefully the building-blocks of material at his disposal, by selecting, modifying and re-arranging them in new configurations in order to fulfil the overall aims of his work.

Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb*

I

Abū 'l-Hasan 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī was a Sufi scholar of the eleventh century who was born in Ghazna and settled eventually in Lahore.¹ The most reliable source of information about his life is his sole surviving work, the *Kashf al-mahjūb*.² This work suggests that, whilst he was first and foremost a Sufi, he had also received a traditional scholastic education, and was particularly interested in *kalām* (scholastic theology); it contains repeated criticism of anthropomorphists (*mutashabbiha*, *hashwiyān*),³ Qadarites (*qadariyān*)⁴ and Mu'tazilites (*mu'tazila* / *ahl-i i'tizāl*).⁵ Moreover Hujwīrī frequently uses the method of dialectical reasoning in his exposition of Sufi doctrine, as indicated by the frequent occurrence in the text of the construct *agar gūyand* ... *mīgū'im* ... ('if they say ... we say ...').⁶ A comparison of Hujwīrī's own biographies of the eponymous founders of the major law-schools suggest that he was most likely affiliated to the Hanafite school, since Abū Hanīfa is afforded the most attention and praise.⁷

Hujwīrī's teacher in Sufism was probably the relatively little-known Abū 'l-Faḍl al-Khuttalī, whom he describes as his role model on the Sufi path (*iqtidā'-i man dar-īn tarīqat bid-ūst*).⁸ The *Kashf al-mahjūb* also contains many references to meetings with other Sufi teachers, during travels in an area extending from Syria (where Khuttalī was based) to the Punjab. Hujwīrī died in Lahore where his shrine is today the most celebrated pilgrimage destination. The dates given traditionally for his death are 456/1063–4 and 464/1071–2.⁹

The *Kashf al-mahjūb* is the oldest surviving work of its kind written in Persian. Similar to Qushayrī's *Risāla*, it is a dual-genre volume covering both the *ṭabaqāt* and manual genres. It was allegedly written in response to questions asked by an enquirer into Sufism named Abū Sa'īd Hujwīrī,¹⁰ and the following passage suggests that it was completed in Lahore, and therefore probably towards the end of the author's life.¹¹

My shaykh had many transmissions (*riwāyāt*) about him, but, at the present time, [relating] more than this is not possible because the written sources are still in Ghazna, whilst I am preoccupied (*girištār*) in the region of Hind amongst ill-natured people (*nājinsān*).

(KM, 110.13–16)

Reynold Nicholson has inferred from the above passage that Hujwīrī was 'taken there (Lahore) as a prisoner against his will'.¹² This interpretation depends on the translation of *girištār* as 'prisoner', but this is not the only possible meaning in the above context. Hujwīrī's description of the people of Hind as *nājinsān* (ill-natured), rather than confirming that he was trapped by enemies, may be seen as simply part of the description of his current situation in negative terms to contrast with the past in his hometown and the positive memories he retains of it (possibly including those of more extensive literary resources).

The above passage alludes to the use of written sources (*kitāb*) for the *Kashf al-mahjūb*. On the basis of a comparison with the major Sufi works that had already been written, it appears that, rather than suffering from a lack of resources, Hujwīrī had most of them at his disposal.¹³

II

The *Kashf al-mahjūb* can be divided into three main sections. While Section Two consists mostly of biographies (see section III below), Sections One and Three are made up of thematic chapters. Section One is structured as follows:

- 1 On the affirmation of knowledge (*ilm*)
- 2 On poverty (*faqr*)
- 3 On [the name] 'Sufism' (*ṭasawwuf*)

- 4 On the wearing of patched cloaks (*muraqqa'āt*)
- 5 On their differences of opinion regarding poverty and purity (*safwa*)
- 6 In explanation of blame (*fī bayān al-malāma*).

With the exception of the fifth chapter, which is best described as an appendix relating to the second and third chapters,¹⁴ all the chapters of Section One share the same structural pattern;¹⁵ Hujwīrī briefly introduces the subject of discussion before presenting citations from the Qur'an and hadith literature; he then elaborates. The most distinctive characteristic of Hujwīrī's approach is his provision of extensive elaboration, in which segments about Sufis from the past are embedded for support and illustration. As a result, he may appear to be expressing his opinions more directly to the reader than contemporaries, like Qushayrī, whose works tend to be made up of juxtaposed segments with minimal commentary.¹⁶

What stands out most in Section One is the sixth chapter, on 'blame' (*malāma*). The mere inclusion of a chapter on *malāma* alongside chapters about what are usually regarded as more central aspects of Sufism is in itself innovative, indicating the significance which Hujwīrī attaches to this subject.¹⁷

Section Three of the *Kashf al-mahjūb* consists largely of a systematic analysis of Sufi practice. It consists of eleven chapters, which are presented as a sequence of 'uncoverings of veils' (*kashf al-hijāb*).

- 1 The Uncovering of the first veil regarding gnosis (*ma'rifa*)
- 2 The Uncovering of the second veil regarding divine unity (*taḥḥūd*)
- 3 The Uncovering of the third veil regarding faith (*īmān*)
- 4 The Uncovering of the fourth veil regarding purification (*ṭahāra*)
- 5 The Uncovering of the fifth veil regarding ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*)
- 6 The Uncovering of the sixth veil regarding almsgiving (*zakāt*)
- 7 The Uncovering of the seventh veil regarding fasting (*ṣawm*)
- 8 The Uncovering of the eighth veil regarding pilgrimage (*hajj*)

- 9 The Uncovering of the ninth veil regarding companionship (*ṣuhba*) together with its manners and rules
- 10 The Uncovering of the tenth veil explaining their manner of speaking (*manṭiq*), the definitions of their expressions (*alfāz*) and the realities of their meanings (*ḥaqā'iq ma'ānīhim*)
- 11 The Uncovering of the eleventh veil regarding the practice of audition (*samā'*) and the explanation of its various forms

Whilst the first three chapters are concerned with theological aspects of Sufism and Chapters Four to Eight are (ostensibly) concerned with the rituals which have become known as 'the pillars of Islam', Chapters Nine to Eleven focus on topics related specifically to the customs and practice of Sufism.¹⁸ The chapters about the customs and practices peculiar to Sufism, which actually account for the much greater portion in length of Section Three,¹⁹ are presented after those about the four main Muslim rituals, creating the impression that they are based on the foundation of the 'pillars of Islam'.

In fact, Chapters Four to Eight are only ostensibly about the Muslim rituals specified in their headings, because they each consist of two sections, only the first of which relates directly to that ritual; the second section in each of these chapters offers a mystical interpretation and elaboration. Thus, the chapter ostensibly about purification leads to a section, twice as long, about repentance (*tauba*); that of prayer leads similarly to a discussion of love (*mahabba*, *'ishq*); that of almsgiving to a section on liberality (*jūd*) and generosity (*sakhāwa*); that of fasting to the mystical significance of 'hunger' (*jū'*); and that of pilgrimage to a section on 'mystical witnessings' (*mushāhadāt*). In this way, the overall scheme of Section Three, grounding Sufi customs and practices on the apparent foundation of the conventional 'pillars of Islam', is repeated in the microcosm of the component chapters.

The culmination of Section Three is the chapter on musical audition (*samā'*). It is to a large extent based on the corresponding chapter of Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-luma'*.²⁰ However, after following closely Sarrāj's method of legitimizing the practice of musical audition (*samā'*), Hujwīrī adds further sections at the end, on dance (*raqs*),²¹ gazing at youths (*al-naẓar fī 'l-aḥdāth*)²² and the rending of garments (*kharq*), respectively.²³ Hujwīrī endorses Sufi dance, which he

terms *ḥarakāt-i wajdī* (ecstatic movements) to distinguish it from other forms of dance, as well as the tearing of garments in the ecstasy of *samā'*, but he draws the line at the involvement of youths.

III

Section Two of the *Kashf al-mahjūb* consists mainly of biographies. They are grouped into the first seven chapters of this section, before the final chapter on contemporary Sufi groups (*ḡirūhhā*). The first four chapters consist of the biographies of 'the leaders of the Sufis (*a'immatuhum*)' amongst, in turn, the following generations and classes of religious authorities:

- 1 the four rightly-guided caliphs amongst the companions of the Prophet (*ṣahāba*)
- 2 the second to the sixth Imams from amongst the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*)²⁴
- 3 the 'people of the canopy' (*ahl al-ṣuffa*)
- 4 'the followers' of the companions (*tābi'ūn*) and their 'helpers' (*anṣār*)

These four chapters encompass, in an overall chronological arrangement, the first two generations of the successors to the Prophet according to the Sunni tradition's image of its own past, as well as the first six Imams of Shi'ism, even though the individuals concerned are not remembered usually with ascetic and mystical characteristics. The inclusion of the *ahl al-bayt*, lined up alongside the *salaf*, indicates Hujwīrī's predilection for the accommodation of plurality.

The fifth chapter of Section Two accounts for more than three times as many pages as the first four chapters combined. It consists of sixty-four biographies presented under the heading, 'Chapter mentioning their leaders from amongst the followers of the followers [of the companions] (*atbā' al-tābi'īn*) until our present day'. The selection of biographies for this chapter, as well as their arrangement, indicate the direct influence of Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*. There are only two significant areas of discrepancy: firstly, Hujwīrī includes seven biographies before that of Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād, which is the first biography in Sulamī's arrangement; secondly, he does not group the biographies into 'generations'. Nonetheless, their order of appearance is usually just the same as in that earlier

work, in a manner comparable to the relationship between Sulamī's arrangement and the *tabaqāt* section of Qushayrī's *Risāla*.²⁵

The *Kashf al-mahjūb* provides a corresponding biography for each of those included in Sulamī's first generation. Moreover, they are all listed before the biography of Junayd which, in the earlier work, marks the beginning of the second generation. A similar pattern can be observed in the biographies which correspond to those found in the later generations of Sulamī's work. For instance, the biographies which correspond to those found in Sulamī's second generation are all found between the aforementioned biography of Junayd and that of Jurayrī which, in the earlier work, marks the beginning of the third generation.²⁶ There are corresponding biographies also for eight of the twenty biographies found in Sulamī's third generation,²⁷ whilst the biography of Abū Bakr al-Shiblī, which heads Sulamī's fourth generation, is the only representative of that generation,²⁸ and only seven of the twenty-three biographies in Sulamī's fifth generation are included in the *Kashf al-mahjūb*. To recapitulate, the *Kashf al-mahjūb* includes, positioned between the biographies of Fudayl b. 'Iyād and Abū Ḥasan al-Huṣrī, corresponding biographies for over half (54) of the 103 biographies included in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, and most of them are presented in the same order in relation to each other.

There are three biographies positioned between those of Fudayl b. 'Iyād and Huṣrī for which there are no corresponding biographies in Sulamī's earlier work. These 'newly-introduced' biographies are devoted to Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, respectively. Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī is introduced as a disciple of Abū Ḥanīfa, whose biography is included already in Chapter Four of this section.²⁹ He has also been included in Qushayrī's *Risāla* and in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*. The inclusion of the jurists Shāfi'ī³⁰ and Ibn Ḥanbal³¹ is also not entirely without precedent in the genre, for the *Hilyat al-awliyā'* includes both of them as well. However, it needs to be taken into consideration that the ten-volume *Hilya* contains over 650 biographies in total. Their inclusion in Hujwīrī's relatively small collection of biographies therefore suggests a more emphatic effort on his part to embed Sufism as an integral part of a wide and authoritative tradition of Muslim scholarship.

It has already been noted that, despite containing the biographies of numerous individuals who are not normally associated with Sufism, the *Hilya* fails to provide a biography of

Hallāj. In the *Kashf al-mahjūb*, however, the third longest biography in the whole work is that of Hallāj (third after those of Abū Ḥanīfa and Fudayl b. 'Iyād).³² The mere inclusion of Hallāj, 'rubbing shoulders' with jurists and Rightly-guided Caliphs, highlights further the fact that Hujwīrī has chosen to accommodate a diverse range of individuals, rather than narrow down his selection to the respectable few.

Hujwīrī is by no means the first to include Hallāj in the Sufi *tabaqāt* genre. Sulamī after all includes him, mentioning at the outset, in the introduction of his biography, the controversy about his legitimacy.³³ Sulamī informs that most shaykhs reject him (*jaddah akthar al-mashā'ikhi*), but identifies only those who defend and praise him.³⁴ Hujwīrī's biography of Hallāj does not merely refer to the controversy, but it is in fact entirely taken up with his defence. It is worth considering in further detail, for it is comparable with his discussions of controversial issues in other sections of the work, such as the aforementioned chapters on *malāma* and *samā'*.³⁵

Hujwīrī begins, like Sulamī, by informing the reader of the controversy over Hallāj's legitimacy, and then naming those authorities who support him.³⁶ Innovatively he adds a further list of authorities – those who suspend judgement (*andar amr-i way tawāquf kardā-and*), which includes Junayd.³⁷ He finally mentions contemporary shaykhs who are in favour of Hallāj, namely Shaykh Abū Sa'īd (al-Mayhānī), Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Gurgānī and Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Shaqqānī.³⁸ He then himself proceeds to defend Hallāj against accusations of heresy; at first, he suggests that many critics have confused him with a namesake who really was a heretic. Then he states the reasons for which the correctly identified Hallāj has been rejected, explaining, in each instance, why there is insufficient reason to condemn him.³⁹ He also claims that Hallāj's utterances have been misunderstood, both by opponents and 'false followers' whom he calls the *Hallājiyān*.⁴⁰

At the end of the biography, immediately after declaring that he personally admires Hallāj, and that he has written further works about him, he reproaches Hallāj's method because it requires painstaking corroboration. He then presents what he judges to be a dangerous utterance attributed to Hallāj, which, when compared with some of the utterances attributed to him by this time in Sufi literature, is hardly the most deserving to be condemned as 'a bane'.⁴¹ Regardless of Hujwīrī's choice of a dangerous utterance

attributed to Hallāj, it strikes the reader that with this criticism he is making an unanticipated departure from his efforts up until that point in support of Hallāj. Perhaps it is intended to reassure the reader that, in spite of his defence of Hallāj, he has been strict in his assessment.

As mentioned above, Hujwīrī innovatively includes Hallāj together with religious authorities from a wide tradition of scholarship and piety, in the *ṭabaqāt* section of his work. This context can only give further strength to the case for approval of Hallāj. The fact that his biography ends on a critical note is comparable to what can be observed in the chapters on *malāma* and *samāʿ*; in both of these chapters, after a process of legitimizing the respective practices, Hujwīrī makes a sudden departure into criticism. This suggests that it is a deliberate technique to facilitate the acceptance of controversial issues, rather than evidence of indecision and confusion on the part of the author; in order to redefine the boundaries of acceptability more accommodatingly, Hujwīrī must reassure the reader that he is not merely a permissivist, but rather that he maintains a firm line between legitimate and illegitimate aspects of the issue concerned.⁴²

The sixth chapter of Section Two contains the biographies of the leaders of recent Sufis (*aʿimmatuhum min al-mutaʾakkhiḥīn*), those who lived too late to be included in the earlier *ṭabaqāt* works.⁴³ It includes the aforementioned shaykhs who allegedly supported Hallāj, Abū Saʿīd b. Abī ʿl-Khayr al-Mayhānī, Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Gurgānī and Abū ʿl-Abbās al-Shaqqānī, as well as Qushayrī, the author of the *Risāla*. Also included is the biography of the relatively little known Khuttalī, whom Hujwīrī apparently took as his own role model.⁴⁴

In the seventh chapter Hujwīrī provides single-sentence references to his contemporary Sufis, who are listed according to the geographical region in which they lived; the list begins with the Sufi contemporaries living in Syria (where Khuttalī was based), and ends with those in Ghazna, from where Hujwīrī himself originated.

To recapitulate, the first seven chapters of Section Two of the *Kashf al-mahjūb*, in common with other writings belonging to the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre, contain biographies arranged in a chronological pattern. They cover the span extending from the time of the Prophet to the time of the author. In this way a continuity is structured between later Sufis, including Hujwīrī's own 'role

model' Khuttalī, and the companions of the Prophet, through the intervening generations of religious authorities. This cohesive schema serves the function of legitimizing the authority of the selected Sufis of Hujwīrī's own generation, as well as the other individuals included in the diachronic community he has structured, notably accommodating Hallāj.

Hujwīrī, in contrast to his contemporary Qushayrī, whose *Risāla* is a dual-generic work like the *Kashf al-mahjūb*, accommodates a diverse range of religious authorities in his choice of Sufi leaders of the past, from either end of the spectrum. There is no doubt that the inclusion of Hallāj is a deliberate decision, for Hujwīrī reveals that he is already aware of the strategy of omitting him when he comments that 'not to register a mention of him would be insincere' (*ithbāt nā-kardan-i dhikr-i way bī-imānatī būd-i*).⁴⁵

IV

The final chapter of Section Two consists of descriptions of Sufi 'groups' (*ḡirāḥiā*), rather than individual biographies.⁴⁶ A total of twelve 'groups' are mentioned, the first ten being classified as 'accepted' (*maqbul*) whilst the final two are 'rejected' (*mardūd*). Taken at face value, this chapter might be understood to represent an account of the actual schools of Sufism that existed in Hujwīrī's day. However, the lack of corroboration in contemporary sources would suggest otherwise.

It is in this context that his method of describing the 'groups' gains greater significance. The ten 'accepted groups' represent a diversity of opinions, and they are each named after a specific individual whose biography is already included in the preceding chapters (e.g. the Junaydiyya after Junayd; the Qaṣṣāriyya after Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār).⁴⁷ Hujwīrī's characterisation of each of the 'groups' consists of an exposition of the doctrine which he attributes to them. In most cases this leads to considerable elaboration. Most of the issues covered are contentious, such as the question of superiority between intoxication (*sukr*) and sobriety (*ṣalw*), and annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and subsistence (*baqāʾ*).⁴⁸ This chapter on Sufi groups therefore constitutes a merging of the biographical and thematic principles of order.

Hujwīrī's objective in this chapter therefore appears to be to expound the various doctrines and debates that are current, rather

than to chronicle the emergence of actual Sufi schools. By presenting contentious subjects as the doctrines of particular 'groups' of Sufis, each of whose authority is derived from an illustrious early Sufi leader, he manages to give legitimacy to a wide range of approaches and opinions. It would appear that his reference to these 'founding fathers' may therefore be primarily to give authority, and this is corroborated by the fact that most of their biographies do not themselves contain even a single reference to the doctrines which are attributed to them in this chapter. For example, Abū Yazīd (Ṭayfūr) al-Bastāmī who is described as a proponent of intoxication over sobriety in the context of the *Ṭayfūriyya*, is not associated with intoxication at all in his biography. Hujwīrī, in the specific context of his account of the *Ṭayfūriyya*, appears to be the first to attribute to him this doctrine, and thus he shapes his depiction in the later Sufi tradition.⁴⁹

The two 'rejected' groups are the *Hulūliyya*, who are allegedly the believers in the heresy of incarnation, and the *Hallājiyya*, the so-called 'false followers' of Hallāj (already referred to in the latter's biography) who are characterised by allowing transgression of the law. Hujwīrī considers these two 'rejected groups' under a single heading,⁵⁰ since their inclusion in the scheme further serves the single purpose of re-defining the limits of acceptability. In this way, the chapter on Sufi groups follows the same pattern as the biography of Hallāj, as well as the aforementioned chapters on *malāma* and *samāʿ*; a diversity of opinions about controversial issues is accommodated by giving a qualified approval. This is achieved by drawing the line at illegitimate belief and practice, which are attributed, at the end of the chapter, to the *Hulūliyya* and the *Hallājiyya* respectively. Hujwīrī thus manages to accommodate the doctrines of the preceding ten groups, even if some of them should be diametrically opposed to each other.⁵¹

The position of this chapter, immediately after the biographies of Sufis, suggests that the ten 'accepted' groups represent the culmination of the Sufi tradition. The arrangement also serves to present the doctrines attributed to each of the various groups included as having the authority of the entire diachronic community that has been structured, stretching back to the time of the Prophet. It is perhaps no coincidence then that this is the chapter for which Hujwīrī reserves his exposition of most of the contentious doctrines and theories associated with Sufism.⁵²

V

Each biography in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* consists of two parts: the introduction and the body. The introductions of those biographies for which there is a corresponding one in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* appear to be related relatively loosely to their earlier counterparts. Consider, for example, the introduction of the biography of Junayd, which is presented below.

Amongst them is the shaykh of shaykhs in the mystical path (*ṭarīqat*), and the leader of leaders in the religious law (*sharīʿat*), Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Junayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Junayd al-Qawārīrī.

- 1 He was accepted by the literalists (*ahl-i zāhir*) as well as those endowed with hearts.
- 2 He was perfect in the [various] branches of knowledge, and the 'mufti' of theology (*uṣūl*), jurisprudence (*furūʿ*), mystical union (*uṣūl*) and social conduct (*muʿāmalāt*).
- 3 He was the leader of the companions of Abū Thawr.
- 4 He has lofty sayings and perfect mystical states, such that all of the mystics agree upon his leadership and no claimant or free-thinker has the ability to oppose him.
- 5 He was the nephew of Sarī Saqāṭī as well as his disciple.

(KM, 161.5–11)

The introduction to Junayd in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* includes information about his names, his authority and his association with Abū Thawr and Sarī ʿl-Saqāṭī. All of these points are also mentioned in the corresponding introduction in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*.⁵³ However, the *Kashf al-mahjūb* omits any mention of Junayd's origins, place of upbringing and circumstances of death, for such details are usually not included in his work. Hujwīrī's introduction is more evaluative than 'factual', and especially places a greater emphasis on the authority of Junayd, which it describes as covering both the Sufi tradition and the scholastic traditions of Islam. Nonetheless, the elements which stress this point appear to be related loosely to information provided originally by Sulamī.⁵⁴ For instance, Element 1 about the acceptance of Junayd (*maqbul-i ahl-i zāhir wa-arbāb al-qulūb*) appears to be derived from a clause in its earlier counterpart (*maqbul ʿalā jamīʿ al-alsina*). This re-created version has the effect of attributing unambiguously to Junayd acceptance by both mystics and non-mystics alike.

The *Kashf al-mahjūb* only names Saqāṭī from amongst the teachers of Junayd in Sufism who are listed in the *Tabaqāt*. This is probably due to the fact that the body of the biography begins (immediately after this mention of him) with a narrative which illustrates their relationship, whilst it contains no material about any other teachers.⁵⁵

The introduction of the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* is presented below:

Amongst them is the heaven of gnosis (*ḥalāk-i ma'rifat*), the angel of love (*malak-i maḥabbat*), Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr al-Bastāmī,

- 1 He was one of the shaykhs, his state (*ḥāl*) greater than the rest and his rank (*sha'n*) the most magnificent of them all, to the extent that Junayd said, Abū Yazīd amongst us has the status (*manzila*) of Gabriel amongst the angels.
- 2 His grandfather had been a Magian, and his father was one of the greats of Bastām.
- 3 He has excellent transmissions of hadiths of the Prophet.
- 4 He was one of these ten famous leaders of Sufism.⁵⁶
- 5 No-one before him made as many discoveries as him concerning the truths of this science.
- 6 In all states he was an admirer of scholastic knowledge (*ilm*) and a venerator of the religious law (*shari'at*), notwithstanding that a group, for the sake of support for their own heresy (*ilhād*), attribute [falsely] something to him. In the beginning, his life was based on religious striving (*mujāḥadat*) and putting into practice good conduct (*barzish-i mu'āmalat*).

(KM, 132.9-19)

The introduction to Abū Yazīd in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* is considerably longer than its counterpart in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*,⁵⁷ as well as being relatively long by the standards of the *Kashf al-mahjūb* itself, thereby immediately suggesting that his importance had increased in the eyes of Hujwīrī. In addition to providing most of the information found already in the *Tabaqāt*, Hujwīrī's introduction innovatively places an emphasis on Abū Yazīd's high rank amongst Sufis. Elements 1, 4 and 5 each function to emphasise this point, and it is none other than Junayd, usually remembered himself as the most authoritative Sufi, who is quoted

in confirmation of Abū Yazīd's pre-eminence. The final element of Hujwīrī's introduction functions to distance Abū Yazīd from any heretical doctrine that might be associated with him. In a similar manner to his defence of Ḥallāj, Hujwīrī explains that a group have falsely attributed their own heresy to Abū Yazīd.

Both of the above introductions are representative of those provided in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* for individuals also included by Sulamī, in that they are loosely based on information provided originally by their respective counterparts half a century before. However, they have been re-created by Hujwīrī relatively liberally, in order to stress the points that are important for the context of his own work. This has the effect of blurring the relationship between the two works to a considerable extent. Hujwīrī makes full use of his principal source, but his over-riding concern is to shape the inherited material to his own needs, rather than to act as a faithful transmitter of the information provided in the foundational work of the genre.

VI

The bodies of the biographies in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* typically consist of segments about their respective subjects, followed by commentary on their significance. In most cases where the segments about the subject are initially presented in Arabic, a translation into Persian is also provided. A segment about the subject, followed (when appropriate) by its translation and commentary together form an integrated 'unit'. The body of the biography of Junayd consists of a sequence of five such units. As already mentioned, the first unit begins with a narrative segment about his relationship with Sarī Saqāṭī, to which reference is made immediately before, in the final element of the introduction of the biography.⁵⁸

One day Sarī was asked, Can a disciple reach a higher level (*daraja*) than [his own] master? He replied, Yes, the proof of this is manifest: Junayd's rank is higher than mine.

This utterance is modesty (*tawāḍu'*) from that great master (*pīr*). He said what he said by means of insight (*baṣīrat*), but no-one can see above oneself, for vision (*dīdār*) involves [looking] below. His utterance [therefore] is clear evidence

that when he saw Junayd above his own level (*marātib*), although he perceived [Junayd as being] above, he was [really] below.

(KM, 161.11–13)

The utterance attributed to Saqāṭī exalts Junayd by suggesting that he had surpassed his own master. Hujwiri's commentary, however, is concerned with removing any ambiguity about what the utterance may imply regarding Saqāṭī's own status; Hujwiri argues that Saqāṭī must have actually been at a higher level than Junayd when he made the comment. The aim appears to be to depict Saqāṭī positively, and this is perhaps not unrelated to earlier polemical material about him.⁵⁹ The commentary manages to fulfil this aim without reducing the significance of the original utterance with regard to the depiction of Junayd, as an exceptional student who is destined to reach the highest rank.

The second unit in the biography of Junayd reinforces the message of the first one.⁶⁰ It begins with another segment about the relationship between Saqāṭī and Junayd. The narrative describes Junayd's elation on receiving directly from the Prophet in a dream the instruction to teach, which leads him to imagine that he has surpassed his own teacher. However, Saqāṭī, who had already instructed Junayd to start teaching for himself, shows that he is already aware of Junayd's dream when he asks why Junayd requires to receive the same instruction from the Prophet before having the confidence to act. This causes Junayd to recognise that Saqāṭī must indeed have a higher rank than himself. Hujwiri's commentary on this narrative consists of the following remark: 'There is clear evidence in this segment that the masters, regardless of their characteristics, are acquainted with the inner state of their disciples (*wa andarīn hikāyat dalīl-i wāḍiḥ ast kay pīrān bi-har sīfat kay bāshand mushrif-i ḥāl-i murīdān bāshand*).'⁶¹

Although the preceding narrative is introduced as one that is well known (*mashhūr*), the only segment in this biography that can actually be traced back to an earlier written source is that of the third unit. In fact, this has been presented already in Chapter 1 above, for it is included in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*.⁶² In that work it takes the form of a dream narrative, in which Khuldī asks Junayd about the relative authority of the words of the prophets and the words of the 'sincere ones'.⁶³ In the *Kashf al-mahjūb*, only Junayd's response is presented, as an isolated statement without either being part of a

question/answer construct or any allusions to a dream narrative context. Hujwiri's commentary on the segment refers to the controversy over the question of superiority between saints and prophets. He suggests that Junayd's utterance illustrates that prophets are superior, which is the view that he himself supports. Hujwiri also refers to 'two groups of heretics' (*mulhida*), in cross-reference to a more detailed discussion of the same controversy later in the work (in the chapter on Sufi 'groups').⁶⁴

The segment about Junayd in the fourth unit is a narrative describing an encounter with Satan (*Iblīs*), where the latter puts Junayd to the test unsuccessfully, for he is protected by God. Hujwiri completes the unit with the moral of the story: 'God always protects his saints from Satan's tricks' (*khudāwand ta'ālā arziyā-i khud-nā andar hama aḥwāl az kaydhā-yi shayṭān nigāh dād*).⁶⁵

The final narrative, which concludes the biography of Junayd, is presented below:

It is related about [Junayd] that one day one of his disciples suffered an inner affliction (*ranjī bi-dīl*) and imagined that he had reached a [lofty] rank. He became opposed to [Junayd]. One day [the disciple] came to test him. [Junayd] saw his intention because of his own pre-eminence. [The disciple] asked him a question. Junayd said, Do you want a clear-cut (*ibārati*) answer or a spiritual one (*ma'nawī*)? He said, Both. [Junayd] replied, If you want the former, it is that if you had tested yourself you would not have needed to test me, and you would not have come here [with the intention of] testing. If you want a spiritual one, it is that I depose you of your sainthood (*wilāyat*). Immediately that disciple's face turned black and he screamed, The comfort of certainty (*yaqīn*) has been vanquished from my heart! He immersed himself in seeking forgiveness and gave up meddling. Then Junayd said to him, You did not know that God's saints are the custodians of the secrets (*wāliyān-i asrār*) – you cannot bear their blows. He cast a breath on [the disciple] and he returned to his [former] purpose, repenting from ever having acted independently in relation to the shaykhs.

(KM, 163.14–164.5)

This narrative describes the relationship between Junayd and one of his own disciples, who tries to test him. It attributes to Junayd

the ability to read the intention of his disciple's question, and to strip him of his spiritual attainments. The latter is verified by the description of the disciple's immediate feeling of loss. Junayd explains to the disciple how he could read his intentions, 'God's saints (*awliyā'*) are the custodians of the secrets'.

The narrative appears to be a culmination of the preceding material in the biography. That begins with a description of the relationship between Junayd and his own (superior) master, Saqā, and continues in the next unit, which possesses extensive commentary on the superiority of prophets over saints. The motif of being tested is introduced by the narrative describing Junayd's trials with Satan. Junayd manages to succeed against him thanks to God's protection, just as in the final narrative, he sees through the questions of his disciple to the hidden agenda. All the component units in the body of this biography, including both their segments about Junayd and any commentary on them that is provided, are therefore linked together cohesively, producing a climax where Junayd is depicted as a Sufi saint with miraculous powers of insight.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the recurrent theme in this biography is the miraculous insight (*firāsa*) of Sufis, for the biographies of Junayd in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* and the *Hilyat al-awliyā'* both offer the same hadith transmission by him about precisely this topic. Whilst Hujwīrī is no longer interested in including hadith transmissions in his biographies, his climactic narrative appears to be derived from the hadith transmission that had already become part of the inherited biographical tradition of Junayd.⁶⁶

The body of the biography of Abū Yazīd contains only three units. Similar to the biography of Junayd, the first unit appears to be an expansion on the introduction of the biography, which attests to Abū Yazīd's commitment to religious striving and the fulfillment of correct conduct in spite of the heresy that is falsely attributed to him (see above). This segment is in fact the utterance included already by Sulamī which attests to Abū Yazīd's appreciation of the differences of opinion of the scholars (*ikhtilāf al-ʿulamā'*) and his concern to put into practice scholastic knowledge (*ʿilm*).⁶⁷ Hujwīrī's commentary explains why this task is both difficult and necessary (as a kind of safety net).⁶⁸

The segment about Abū Yazīd of the next unit is the following utterance, which in Sulamī's corresponding biography is juxtaposed immediately after its variant of the aforementioned *ikhtilāf* utterance: 'Heaven has no importance in the opinion of the lovers

(of God), and the lovers are veiled by their love' (*al-janna lā khaṭar alayhi ʿinda ahl al-mahabba wa-ahl al-mahabba mahjūbūn bi-mahabba-him*).⁶⁹ The fact that these two segments form the foci of juxtaposed units in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* suggests that they are likely to have been obtained together directly from that source. Hujwīrī, in his commentary to this utterance, explains that heaven is without importance to the lovers of God because it is (merely) created (*makhluq*),⁷⁰ whilst love, being an attribute of God, is uncreated (*wa-mahabbat-i way sifāt-i way-ast nāmakhluq*).⁷¹ Then he explains that the lovers of God are veiled by their love because love requires the duality of lover and beloved, which is incompatible with divine unity (*wa-dūstān bi-dūstī mahjūb-and az ānchi wujūd-i dūst du'ī iqtidā' kunad wa-andar asl-i tawhīd du'ī šūrat nagīrad*).⁷²

The biography of Abū Yazīd culminates with the following unit, the initial segment of which (about Abū Yazīd) is not found in any earlier work.

It is related that [Abū Yazīd] said, Once I went to Mecca and saw the house (the Kaaba) on its own. I said [to myself], The pilgrimage is not acceptable for I have seen many stones of this kind. I went again and saw the house and the lord of the house. I said [to myself], This is still not the essence of unity (*haqīqat-i tawhīd*). I went a third time and saw the lord of the house but not the house itself. Inside me a voice exclaimed, Bāyazīd, if you were not to see yourself whilst seeing the whole world, you would then no longer be a polytheist (*mushrik*), but since you do not see the whole world but you do see yourself, you remain a polytheist. Then I repented, whilst at the same time repenting from perceiving my own existence.

This is a subtle story about the soundness of his inner state (*hāl*) and a good example for those endowed with such states. God knows best.

(KM, 134.4–11)

This autobiographical narrative parallels the preceding utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd about God's lovers, according to the interpretation provided in the latter's commentary. Just as the lovers place no importance on heaven in relation to God's love because it is 'created', Abū Yazīd, in his search for 'the essence of divine unity' (*haqīqat-i tawhīd*), places no importance on the performance of a pilgrimage merely to 'God's house'. Both the

lovers in the preceding utterance and Abū Yazīd in the autobiographical narrative are by implication attributed with an advanced status in relation to ordinary Muslims who are content with heaven and pilgrimage to the Kaaba. Moreover, in spite of their heightened sensitivity, both the lovers and Abū Yazīd ultimately remain short of divine unity (*tawhīd*). In the former case, it is because love requires the duality (*du'ī*) of lover and beloved, whilst in the latter Abū Yazīd is advised that he still sees himself despite no longer seeing the Kaaba, and thus remains a polytheist.

To recapitulate, whilst the segments about Abū Yazīd in the last two units (out of three) are related to each other thematically, neither of them are related in the same way to the initial unit of the body of the biography. That unit (including both segment and commentary) performs the function of assuring the reader that Abū Yazīd's religious practice was sound, thereby serving as a preparation for the subsequent material. That is to say, it offers a secure foundation at the start of the body of the biography, on which more controversial opinions regarding the value of heaven and pilgrimage can be presented.

The biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd exemplify the most distinctive feature of Hujwiri's biographies in relation to other writings of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre. For each of them he has selected and arranged segments for inclusion in order to develop a central theme. The biographies in Qushayrī's *Risāla* have also been observed to contain a number of sequences of thematically related segments, although, without the aid of commentary they are far from cohesive. The dual-generic nature of each of these two works, which requires the arrangement of component segments according to topic for one section, whilst according to individual subject for the other, would have facilitated the merging of the genres.

VII

The creativity in Hujwiri's method is most striking in his innovative inclusion of topics that had previously not been brought to prominence, such as the chapter on *malāma* and the sub-sections on dancing, tearing one's garments and gazing at youths during *samā'*. Another conspicuous innovation is the provision of the chapter on Sufi groups (*ḡirūḥhā*) at the culmination of Section Two of the *Kashf al-mahjūb*.

Up until this final chapter, Section Two follows the familiar structure of the *ṭabaqāt* genre, by presenting in an overall chronological pattern the biographies of religious authorities from the immediate successors of the Prophet to the Sufi contemporaries of the author. The chapter on Sufi groups consists of sub-sections covering ten 'accepted' groups and two 'rejected' ones.⁷³ Included amongst the ten accepted groups are the *Ṭayfūriyya* (the *Ṭayfūrians*) and the *Junaydiyya* (the *Junaydians*), which are named after (Ṭayfūr) Abū Yazīd al-Bastāmī and Junayd respectively. The descriptions of these two groups are taken up mostly with the account of a debate over the question of superiority between sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) and intoxication (*sukr*). This debate is treated extensively in the description of the *Ṭayfūrians*, which immediately precedes the description of the *Junaydians*.

The *Ṭayfūrians* are introduced as follows:

The *Ṭayfūrians*: this group regard as their leader Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. 'Isā 'l-Bastāmī. He is one of the Sufi chiefs and one of their greats. His path is that of rapture (*ghalba*) and intoxication (*sukr*).

(KM, 228.18–229.1).

This introduction attributes to Abū Yazīd, whom the *Ṭayfūrians* regard as their leader, a method characterised by intoxication (*sukr*) and rapture (*ghalba*). However, in the remainder of the description of the *Ṭayfūrians*, Abū Yazīd is mentioned again only twice. In the first of these instances it is reported that he considered intoxication (*sukr*) to be superior to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*).⁷⁴ The second instance is the following narrative about an exchange with Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh, which is presented below together with Hujwiri's commentary:

The following story has been passed down about Abū Yazīd, [which is interpreted] the wrong way around (*maqlūb*): Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh wrote a letter to him, asking, What do you say regarding someone who becomes drunk with one drop of the sea of love? Bāyazīd wrote in reply, What do you say regarding someone who, if all the oceans of the world were to become the wine of love, would drink them all and still scream out about being thirsty?

People assume that Yaḥyā has alluded to intoxication (*sukr*) and Bāyazīd to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*). The opposite is the case for

the possessor of sobriety is the one who cannot bear a drop, while the possessor of intoxication is the one who, in drunkenness, drinks everything and still needs more, since drinking is the means of intoxication. It is more fitting for like to pair with like (*jins bi-jins*). Sobriety is opposed to it; it does not rest comfortably with drink.

(KM, 233.8-15)

The above narrative is a variant in Persian of one provided in the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*.⁷⁵ It depicts Abū Yazīd as rebuking Yahyā b. Mu'ādh for boasting about becoming drunk with a mere drop of the 'sea of love' (*baḥr-i mahabbah*). Abū Yazīd suggests in his response that it is better to have a greater tolerance, enabling one to thirst for even more of it. This anecdote lends itself to the interpretation that Yahyā boasted about his propensity for intoxication, whilst Abū Yazīd held that remaining sober despite drinking 'oceans' of wine is superior. Hujwiri himself admits that this is the usual interpretation, but argues that it should actually be interpreted the other way around (*maqlūb*). This is in order to use the anecdote as evidence for his attribution to Abū Yazīd of the opinion that intoxication is superior to sobriety. Hujwiri suggests that a sober person cannot bear even a drop and therefore becomes drunk easily, whilst an intoxicated person can drink vast quantities because he is drunk already.

The fact that Hujwiri resorts to using this particular narrative as the only one about Abū Yazīd with the message that intoxication is superior to sobriety, despite the fact that it can only serve his purposes if the more obvious interpretation is ignored in favour of his innovative one, is understandable, since it is the only segment about Abū Yazīd to be found in his earlier biographies which refers explicitly to intoxication.⁷⁶

The description of the Ṭayfūrians is taken up completely with Hujwiri's account of the debate about the question of superiority between sobriety and intoxication. The Ṭayfūrians are said to prefer intoxication because it removes an individual's self-control (*tadbīr*) and free will (*ikhtiyār*), which are considered to be veils over perfection. The proponents of sobriety retort that intoxication is merely a distortion of one's perception, and so is itself such a veil.⁷⁷ Hujwiri states his preference for the latter view which he attributes to Junayd and his followers.

My own shaykh, who was of the Junaydian school (*Junaydi madhhab*), used to say that intoxication is the playground of children (*hāṭṭāh-i kūdahān*) whilst sobriety is the place of the annihilation of men (*fanāyāh-i mardān*). I, 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Jullūdī, say in agreement with my shaykh, that the perfection of the state of the possessor of intoxication is sobriety.

(KM, 232.4-6)

By this statement Hujwiri associates himself, through his own shaykh, with the 'Junaydian school'. Even though he has indicated his own allegiance here, Hujwiri proceeds to offer a reconciliation between the two viewpoints in the debate.

When the foundation is firm, sobriety (*sahw*) is like intoxication (*sukr*), and intoxication like sobriety, but when there is no foundation they are [distinct] as they are usually understood. In short, sobriety and intoxication are in the path of men. They are caused by a difference of opinion. But when the sultan of the truth shows his beauty sobriety and intoxication both appear to be intruders (*ṭufayf*) Regarding this matter [the poet] says,

When the morning appears with the star of wine
The drunk and the sober will be the same.

(KM, 234.6-234.11)

The above passage shows Hujwiri's aim to reconcile the difference of opinion in such a way that both sides can be considered legitimate. He diverts attention from the debate by suggesting that such differences of opinion seem like relatively worthless 'intruders' when considered from the perspective of union ('when the sultan of the truth shows his beauty').

The section on the Junaydians begins with the following introduction:

The Junaydians. The Junaydians regard as their leader Abū 'I-Qāsim al-Junayd b. Muḥammad. In his time he used to be called 'the peacock of the scholars' (*qānūn al-'ulamā'*), and he was the chief of this sect and their leader of leaders. His path is based on sobriety (*sahw*) contrary to the Ṭayfūrians, and his difference of opinion has [already] been mentioned. His is the most famous method (*madhhab*), and my shaykhs have all been Junaydian. Apart from this [mention] in the discussions

of the difference of opinion, there is much attributed to him regarding conduct on the path. However, for fear of prolixity, I have restricted it to this amount, but if someone should need to know more than this he must read from somewhere else until it becomes clear, because my method in this book is conciseness and desisting from prolixity.

(KM, 235.1-8)

Despite attributing to Junayd glorious epithets and describing his method as the most famous one in Sufism, Hujwīrī surprisingly does not actually provide a detailed account of that method. Instead he refers the reader back to the previous section, about the Ṭayfūriyans, where Junayd's difference of opinion (*ikhtilāf*) concerning the relative status of sobriety and intoxication is mentioned, as well as to other parts of the book for his advice about conduct.⁷⁸ The fact that Hujwīrī does not offer here a detailed account of 'the most famous method' amongst the Sufis is itself an indication that this is not the aim of his chapter on Sufi groups. Rather the aim appears to be to outline acceptable differences of opinion amongst Sufis. He achieves this by attributing opinions to various Sufi groups who are each named after an illustrious early Sufi. Hence the Ṭayfūriyans and the Junaydiyans are only mentioned in the context of the debate over the question of superiority between sobriety and intoxication.

The sections on the Ṭayfūriyans and the Junaydiyans are two amongst ten sections in this chapter which describe 'accepted Sufi groups'. They are typical of such sections in that their primary concern is to explore a debate rather than offer a systematic description of an actual Sufi group. The fact that there is no corroboration for the existence of most of these Sufi groups outside of Hujwīrī's work supports the impression given by his method of describing them, namely that these groups are mostly his own constructs, designed to facilitate the accommodation of multifariousness amongst Sufis.

To recapitulate, Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb* is a dual-generic Sufi manual that has been skilfully composed on the foundation of the major Sufi works that had already been written. The latter include Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, Qushayrī's *Risāla* and Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-Luma'*, all three of which are referred to specifically by him. Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb* is an innovative work, in that it includes discussions of topics that had not yet been included in the same

level of detail in any major work of Sufism (e.g. *malāma*, *al-kharq*, the legitimacy of Ḥallāj, the diversity of opinions amongst Sufi groups). In all these cases his aim is to accommodate a contentious subject, and thus extend the boundaries of acceptability in Sufism. Although Hujwīrī may appear on occasion to be indecisive and incoherent, nonetheless the agenda behind these occasions remains consistent.

In a number of ways, Hujwīrī is also the most overtly creative of the authors who have contributed to the *ṭabaqāt* genre. This is highlighted not only in his deliberate inclusion of the chapter on contemporary Sufi groups at the culmination of his *ṭabaqāt* section – a conspicuous merging of the *ṭabaqāt* and manual genres – but also in the form and content of his actual biographies themselves; for each particular biography he has reworked and juxtaposed an exclusive selection of material for the purposes of developing a central theme, whilst he also provides extensive commentary to facilitate the cementing together of the component segments into a cohesive and unified whole.

Part Three

We are members of the field of historicity, as storytellers, as novelists, as historians. We belong to history before telling stories or writing history. The game of telling is included in the reality told.

(Paul Ricoeur, 'The narrative function', p.294)

Jāmī's *Nafahāt al-uns*

I

Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d.898/1492) is said to have spent most of his life in Herat, the main town near the place of his birth. He received training in the religious sciences with a particular emphasis on scholastic theology (*kalām*) and the study of hadiths.¹ At a young age he became the disciple of the Naqshbandi Sufi *khwāja*,² Sa'd al-Dīn Muḥammad Kāshgharī (d.860/1455). He is also linked to the person whom he describes as the most influential master of this tradition during his own lifetime, namely Khwāja 'Ubaydullāh Ahrār.³

Over forty works are ascribed to Jāmī, most of which have survived.⁴ They reveal that he was an accomplished author in a diverse range of genres. Jāmī is most renowned at a popular level for his poetry. His seven *mathnawīs*, known collectively as the *Haft auran* (the seven thrones), include, in addition to reworkings of popular stories (e.g. *Laylī wa Majnūn*), a work written in honour of the aforementioned 'Ubaydullāh Ahrār, called appropriately *Tuhfat al-Ahrār*.

The prose works ascribed to Jāmī include commentaries on parts of the Qur'an and the hadith corpus as well as mystical works. The latter include a commentary on Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-hikam*.⁵ Jāmī also composed his own mystical writings, including the treatise called *Lawā'ih* (flashes) which is heavily influenced by the ideas of Ibn al-'Arabī.⁶ The most famous of his prose works, however, is the *Nafahāt al-uns min haḍarāt al-quds*, a collection of approximately six hundred biographies, covering the period from

the second/eighth century until the ninth/fifteenth century. In the introduction of this work, Jāmī informs that he was asked to compile it in the year 881/1476 by Amīr Nizām al-Dīn 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī (d.906/1500), the celebrated Chaghatay minister and scholar.⁷

A number of editions of the *Nafahāt* have been prepared, and it has been translated into Arabic and Turkish.⁸ Recently Mahmud Abedi prepared the first annotated edition, which is the one that has been used for this study. It is based on the six most important manuscripts of the text, the oldest of which is believed to date from 883/1478, that is, only two years after the reported request for Jāmī to compile the work.⁹

II

The *Nafahāt al-uns* consists of an introduction¹⁰ and approximately 600 biographies.¹¹ The biographies are divided into two disproportionate sequences: the main sequence consists of approximately 570 biographies of Sufi men, and it is followed by a comparatively short sequence of only 34 biographies of Sufi women, demarcated from the main sequence by a separate heading and introduction, thus constituting a form of appendix.¹²

The most immediately recognisable feature of the main sequence of biographies is that it begins with material obtained directly from the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*. To be more precise, the influence of that work is apparent in the first 322 biographies, from the first biography, that of Abū Hāshim al-Ṣūfī, until that of Shaykh Abū 'Alī Daqqāq.¹³ Over 250 (nearly 4/5) of the biographies which are listed between the aforementioned pair correspond to those found in the earlier work. Moreover the bulk of their actual contents seems to have been obtained directly from it.¹⁴ The first 322 biographies of the *Nafahāt* thus constitute the first of the three major sections into which the main sequence of biographies can be divided – one which is based closely on the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*.

The biographies in this section are presented in approximately the same order as in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* itself. This means that Sulamī's original 'generation' arrangement is also evident to a limited extent in the *Nafahāt*, filtered through the influence of the intermediary Persian *Ṭabaqāt*. There are, however, a number of

discrepancies in the specific order of presentation between the *Nafahāt* and the latter work, which may be instructive. The most conspicuous change in position of a biography concerns that of Walīd b. 'Abdullāh al-Saqqā'. Whilst it has been listed in the second generation section (out of six) in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, it is found towards the very beginning of the *Nafahāt*, following after the biography of Dhū 'l-Nūn.¹⁵ The content of the biography in both works is virtually the same – it is made up of segments which are about Dhū 'l-Nūn and are transmitted by Saqqā'. This biography therefore appears to have been transferred in the later work to a position which is more appropriate in view of its actual content.

It has already been demonstrated that a name classification system was used at one stage for ordering biographies in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, and remains prominent.¹⁶ Biographies in that work are often juxtaposed according to the names (usually the *kunya*) of their subjects, creating, for example, groups of juxtaposed biographies about Sufis with the *kunya* Abū Bakr in each of the last four generation sections (3rd–6th) of that work.¹⁷ In the *Nafahāt* these four separate groups, as well as smaller groups and previously isolated biographies of Sufis called Abū Bakr, have been merged to create one continuous group of (thirty-five) juxtaposed biographies. Since this group includes members classified as belonging to a total of four different generations, it testifies that the classification of early Sufis into separate generations had lost its relevance by the time of Jāmī's late fifteenth century re-structuring of the past.¹⁸

The Persian *Ṭabaqāt* is exceptional for a work of its genre by virtue of the fact that it neither begins with the biographies of the generations of the *salaf*, nor links its first members back to them. This has not been missed in the process of the redaction of the work to fulfil the needs of the *Nafahāt*. Whilst the main sequence of biographies begins in a similar fashion to the Persian *Ṭabaqāt*, with Abū Hāshim ('the first person to be called Sufi'), it also includes, in the preceding introduction, the citation of Qushayrī's effort to explain how the first people known as Sufis are the successors of the *salaf*.¹⁹

Seventy of the biographies listed between those of Abū Hāshim and Daqqāq (the overlapping section) in the *Nafahāt* are not found in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* at all. A number of different criteria appear to have been used in deciding where exactly to insert these new

biographies within the inherited framework. Most frequently the new members have been positioned either next to a Sufi with the same name, or one with whom the new member is associated in some way; nineteen new biographies are found juxtaposed next to that of an individual with the same *kunya*,²⁰ while five new biographies are similarly found juxtaposed next to that of an individual with the same first name²¹ and three new biographies are found juxtaposed next to that of an individual with the same *nisba*.²² Twenty-nine of the new biographies are found juxtaposed next to that of an individual with whom the subject of the new biography was associated in some way.²³ A few of the remaining fourteen newly-introduced biographies, each usually consisting of just one narrative about their subject, appear to have been positioned immediately after biographies containing narratives with the same motif,²⁴ whilst others are inserted next to those of individuals from the same region.²⁵ It would therefore seem that additional biographies were inserted into the inherited framework, according to whichever type of association with an existing one was judged to be the most convenient.²⁶

The new additions include the only three biographies which had been listed originally in the first generation of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*, but were omitted altogether from the Persian *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*. Furthermore, both the introductions and bodies of these three biographies, which are devoted to Ḥātim b. 'Unwān al-Aṣamm, Aḥmad b. Abī 'l-Ḥawārī and 'Abdullāh b. Khubayq al-Anṭākī respectively, suggest that they have been obtained directly from Sulamī's work.²⁷ Their inclusion indicates that Jāmī was acquainted with both Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* and the Persian *Tabaqāt* in sufficient detail to take note of this discrepancy; he makes amends by including them after all of the members who originally belonged to the first generation of the Persian *Tabaqāt*.

It has already been pointed out that, according to the headings of the biographies in the Persian *Tabaqāt* more than one biography is provided for certain individuals,²⁸ but in such cases usually only one of them actually contains material about the subject himself. These are the only ones that are retained in the *Nafahāt*, as if the other 'false' biographies were identified as such, and removed.²⁹

The way in which the framework of the Persian *Tabaqāt* has been transformed in Jāmī's *Nafahāt* therefore indicates that it has been redacted with the aims of both tidying up the inconsistencies and incoherencies of that organic text and adding new material

considered relevant from Jāmī's later standpoint. One of the most conspicuous effects is that the generation system, originally imported into the Persian *Tabaqāt* from Sulamī's work, is obscured considerably. Associations by virtue of the names or relationships of their subjects determine the order of biographies in the *Nafahāt* more often than their generation classification. It is perhaps understandable that, for a fifteenth century author such as Jāmī, the classification of Sufis living between the eighth and tenth centuries into separate generations would have been less relevant than for his eleventh century predecessors in Sufi historiography. In fact, all the generations encompassed by the Persian *Tabaqāt* are referred to collectively in the introduction of the *Nafahāt*, simply as the *mutaqaddimān* (early members).³⁰

III

The biographies in the *Nafahāt* which correspond to those found in the Persian *Tabaqāt* usually consist of two parts (the introduction and the body). The biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Nafahāt* in fact is made up entirely of material that has been provided already in the Persian *Tabaqāt*. Its body consists of a total of ten segments of material, all of which are found, in the same order,³¹ amongst the first 23 segments (constituting the first 9 'bundles')³² of the corresponding biography in the earlier work. This would suggest that the *Tabaqāt* was used systematically from the beginning until a sufficient amount of material had been extracted from it.

The segments of material provided in that overlapping portion of the earlier biography that were not selected from it include several segments of addenda, that is, segments that do not refer directly to Abū Yazīd himself.³³ The inappropriateness of such segments for a biography of Abū Yazīd is probably the reason for their omission from the *Nafahāt*.³⁴

A comparison of the following representative passage in the *Nafahāt* with that of corresponding material in the Persian *Tabaqāt* may serve to elucidate the precise methods of redaction applied:

N1 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, Many lies (*dunūgh*) have been told about Bāyazīd. One of them is that he said, I arrived and pitched my tent opposite the throne of God (*barābar-i 'arsh*).

N2 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, This utterance is infidelity (*kufī*) in relation to the shariah and [an indication of] remoteness (*bu'd*) in relation to the truth (*ḥaqīqat*). Can you achieve the truth by projecting yourself to view? What is the truth? Escaping from yourself. Achieve the truth by your own non-existence (*nābūd*)! Saying, Opposite [God's throne] about oneself is infidelity. Can you achieve divine unity (*taḥḥīd*) by duality (*dugānagī*)? Descent is necessary not ascent!

N3 Ḥuṣrī said, If I see the throne of God then I am an infidel (*kāfir*).

(N, 54.22–55.6)

TA1 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, Many lies (*durūgh*) are said about Bāyazīd. One of those that have been made up about him is that he said, I arrived and pitched my tent opposite the throne of God (*barābar-i 'arsh*).

TA2 *Shaykh al-Islām* said, This utterance is infidelity (*kufī*) in relation to the shariah and [an indication of] remoteness (*bu'd*) in relation to the truth (*ḥaqīqat*). Can you achieve the truth by projecting yourself to view? What is the truth? Escaping from yourself. Achieve the truth by your own non-existence (*nābūd*)! Saying, Opposite [God's throne], is infidelity.

TA3 Ḥuṣrī says, If I see the throne of God then I am an infidel (*mulhīd*), and if I were to arrive and pitch my tent, where exactly have you arrived?

TA4 Can you achieve divine unity (*taḥḥīd*) by duality (*dugānagī*)? Descent is required, not ascent!

(TABA, 88.14–89.6)

The most obvious discrepancy between the two corresponding passages is that the version in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* consists of four segments, whilst that of the *Nafahāt* consists of only three segments. In the *Ṭabaqāt*, the first two segments (TA1, TA2) consist of a report about Bāyazīd and comments on that report respectively, both of which are attributed to Anṣārī under the rubric *Shaykh al-Islām guft*. The third segment (TA3) is a comment attributed to Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 371/982) about the first segment (TA1). The fourth segment (TA4) is a continuation of the

preceding segment of comments attributed to Anṣārī (TA2), which seems to have been separated from it by the interpolation of the intervening comment attributed to Ḥuṣrī (TA3). It is also probably due to that interpolation, embedded between hortatory comments directed at an audience using the second-person, that it changes clumsily from the first to the second-person (*wa'r shudam khayma zalam kūā shudī*).

The above passage in Jāmi's *Nafahāt*, which is clearly based on the *Ṭabaqāt* version, differs by virtue of its presentation of the comment attributed to Ḥuṣrī (N3) after all the commentary attributed to Anṣārī (N2) rather than in the middle, thus avoiding its separation into two parts. Another discrepancy lies in the omission of the problematic final clause of the comment attributed to Ḥuṣrī. Furthermore, the version of the *Nafahāt* is more concise, and it employs alternative vocabulary (e.g. *kāfir* // *mulhīd*) probably due to the changing connotations of these terms in the different historical contexts.

The biography of Junayd in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* has been shown to be highly problematic as a result of interpolation and organic growth over an extended period.³⁵ The way in which it has been used as a source for the corresponding biography in the *Nafahāt* may clarify how the effects of growth and interpolation had been interpreted. The body of the biography of Junayd in the *Nafahāt* consists of twenty-five segments, nineteen of which are provided already in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt*, in the same order. However, only six of these latter are based on material located strictly within the parameters of the biography of Junayd in the earlier work,³⁶ three juxtaposed segments correspond to similarly juxtaposed segments found in the chapter, 'An issue about divine unity',³⁷ while the remainder of the overlapping material corresponds to material located originally in its biography of Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Surayj, which follows the aforementioned chapter about divine unity, and similarly appears to be a growth from the biography of Junayd.³⁸

The fact that the biography of Junayd in the *Nafahāt* contains several segments about him which are found originally outside of his biography in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt*, amongst sections that had grown out of it, indicates that the problematic nature of the earlier work was taken into consideration. That is to say, the redaction took into account the fact that material about Junayd is also found after the close of his biography has been demarcated in the earlier work. Furthermore, the most conspicuous omission from the

material already provided within the parameters of the actual biography of Junayd in the precursor is the most problematic passage of all, namely the incoherent sequence of overlapping segments related to the theme of knowledge (*ilm*), which exemplifies the effects of an extended process of organic growth and interpolation in the Persian *Tabaqāt*.³⁹

The first three segments in the body of the biography of Junayd in the *Nafahāt* are amongst those that are derived from sources additional to the Persian *Tabaqāt*; in fact, they are Persian versions of segments provided already in the corresponding biography of 'Abdullāh al-Yāfi'ī's (d.768/1367) celebrated work of the *ta'rikh* genre, the *Mir'āt al-janān*. Although Jāmī does not name this work as their source within these segments themselves, in his introduction to this biography he acknowledges the inclusion of information 'in Yāfi'ī's *ta'rikh*'.⁴⁰ The first of the three segments that have been obtained from that source is presented below, followed by the original version.

N One day in his childhood (*ayām-i shighar*) Junayd was playing with children. Sarī Saqatī said, Hey lad (*ghulām*), what do you have to say about thankfulness (*shukr*)? He said, Thankfulness is that you do not make use of his favours (*ni'am*) in acts of disobedience (*ma'āsī*) against him. Sarī said, I fear very much that your share of fortune lies only in your tongue. Junayd said, I was always frightened of that remark until I went before him one day, having brought something that he needed – he said, Rejoice (*bishārat bād*), for I had requested from God that he send this to me in the hands of someone who would be successful (*muflihī yā muvaffaqī*)!

(N, 80.3–7)

M From his childhood (*shighar*) [Junayd] was made to speak about gnosis and legal regulations, such that when his maternal uncle Sarī was asked about thankfulness (*shukr*), while Junayd was playing with children, he asked him, Hey lad (*ghulām*), what do you say? [Junayd] replied, Thankfulness is that you do not make use of his favours (*ni'am*) in acts of disobedience (*ma'āsī*) against him. Sarī said, How much I fear for you that your fortune lies only in your tongue! Junayd said, I did not cease from fearing these words until I entered before him one day, having brought something that he needed – he said to me, Rejoice (*abshir*) for I appealed to

God to send that to me in the hands of someone who would be successful (*muflih aw qāla muvaffaq*)!

(al-Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt*, II, 234.3–8)

That the body of the biography of Junayd in the *Nafahāt* should begin with the above narrative (N) seems appropriate, since it describes events set in his childhood. It functions to confirm that Junayd was not only a clever speaker at a very early age, but also that he was set to continue to receive divine favour. An intriguing twist regarding the creation and development of the above narrative is revealed on comparison with the following, originally discrete segments of material.

TA Junayd says, As a seven-year old I was playing with my friend in front of Sarī Saqatī's teaching-circle (*halqa*). He called me back. I greeted him. He was talking whilst standing stiffly. He asked me, Hey boy, what is thankfulness (*shukr*)? What is trust (*tawakkul*)? I replied, That you do not use his gift in disobedience (*ma'siyat*). Sarī said, It is clear that your share of fortune from God is your tongue.

(TABA, 168.9–13)

H1 I heard Abū 'l-Ḥasan b. Miqṣam say that he heard Muḥammad b. Sa'īd say that he heard Junayd b. Muḥammad, when he was asked about the essence of thankfulness (*haqīqat al-shukr*), say, That you do not make use of any of his favours (*ni'am*) for disobedience (*ma'āsī*) against him.

(H, X, 268.21–3)

H2 Al-Jahdamī related to me that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan related to him that Abū 'l-Qāsim Bardān al-Hāwandī had related to him, saying that he heard Junayd say, I came to Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Sarī one day and knocked on his door. He answered, Who is that? I said, Junayd. He said, Come in! I entered, and there he was sitting alert. I had four dirhams with me, so I gave them to him. He said, Rejoice (*abshir*) for you will succeed, because I needed these four dirhams and so I had prayed, O God, send it to me in the hands of a man who will succeed (*yuflih*) before you!

(H, X, 270.22–271.2)

Both the segment in the Persian *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* (TA) and the first of the pair of segments from the *Hilya* (H1) offer early variants

of the utterance about thankfulness (*shukr*), which eventually forms the first part of the narrative provided by both Yāfi'ī and Jāmi. The variant in the Persian *Tabaqāt* (TA) is more elaborate than that of the *Hilya* (H1), as it offers details about Junayd's age and his actions at the time of the encounter, as well as a final comment by Saqatī. Most of these additional details are preserved and elaborated in the later narratives.

The second segment of the pair from the *Hilya* (H2) forms the basis of the second part of the eventual narrative. Without the continuation that this provides, it would have ended on a negative note (Junayd's misgivings). Whilst in its earliest written version this second part is an isolated narrative formed around the motif of giving money to a devotee of God, once it is combined with the narrative relating Saqatī's misgivings about Junayd, it provides reassurance that Junayd received more favours from God than merely his way with words.⁴¹

The complete (two-part) narrative had been compiled for the first time, to my knowledge, by Yāfi'ī, and was eventually obtained from that work by Jāmi, in spite of his detailed knowledge of the earliest textual sources of its component parts. It suggests that he preferred complex narratives, and that their historicity was not his overriding concern.

The next two segments in this biography are also based on material in the corresponding biography of Yāfi'ī's *Mir'āt*. These segments, which are presented below followed by their earlier versions, consist of a narrative and commentary attributed to Yāfi'ī.

N Junayd said, Sarī told me, Hold a session (*majlis*) and speak to the people! I doubted my self (*nafs*) and did not consider it worthy enough until I saw the Messenger in a dream on a Thursday night. He said, Speak to the people! I woke up and went to the door of Sarī's house before dawn. I knocked on the door. He said, You did not judge me to be correct until you were told [by the Prophet]. Then, at the break of day, I held a session and started to speak. News spread that 'Junayd is speaking'. A Christian youth, who was not wearing the usual clothing of Christians, stood at the periphery of the meeting. He asked, Shaykh, what is the meaning of the saying of the Messenger of God, Beware of the insight (*firāsa*) of the believer for he sees by the light of God? Junayd said, I hung my head down for a while, then I lifted it up and said,

Embrace Islam for the time for you to become a Muslim has arrived!

Imam Yāfi'ī says, People think that there is one miracle by Junayd in this, but I say that there are two: firstly, his knowledge of the young man's infidelity; secondly, his knowledge that he would become a Muslim at that time.

(N, 80.8–18)

M [Junayd] said, My uncle Sarī told me, Speak to the people! There was reticence in my heart from speaking to the people and I used to doubt myself of being worthy of that. I saw the Messenger of God in a dream on a Thursday night. He said to me, Speak to the people! I went to [Sarī] before dawn, and I knocked on the door. He said to me, You would not believe until you were told [by the Prophet]! The next day I held a session in the main mosque (*jāmi'*) and started to speak. The news spread amongst the people that 'Junayd is holding a session to speak to the people'. A Christian youth came before me in disguise (*mutanakkiran*). He asked, Shaykh, what is the meaning of the saying of the Messenger of God, Beware of the insight (*firāsa*) of the believer for he sees by the light of God? Junayd said, I hung my head down for a while, then I lifted my head up and said to him, Embrace Islam for the time for you to become a Muslim has arrived, and the youth embraced Islam.

People believe that there is one miracle of Junayd in this, but I say that there are two: firstly, his knowledge of the young man's infidelity; secondly, his knowledge that he would become a Muslim at that time.

(al-Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt*, II, 231.18–232.7)

The above narrative in the *Nafahāt*, which has been obtained from Yāfi'ī's *Mir'āt*, describes Junayd's first teaching session. It is positioned appropriately towards the beginning of the body of the biography, preceded only by the narrative about Junayd's childhood. To begin with, the differences between the two versions of this narrative are worth considering, because they exemplify how segments can be transformed, even in a close translation. For example, Jāmi's description of the Christian youth (*jawānī tarsā na dar libās-i tarsāyān bar kinār-i majlis bi-īstād*) is not merely a translation of Yāfi'ī's description (*fa-waqafa 'alayya ghulām*

naṣrānī mutanakkiran), but it is an interpretation of the meaning of the relatively ambiguous *mutanakkiran* (in disguise), whilst also emphasising that the Christian is an outsider by situating him at the periphery of the teaching circle.⁴² The omission of the specific location of Junayd's first meeting, in the main mosque (*bi-'l-jāmi'*), may perhaps also be significant, especially since the same detail is similarly omitted on other occasions in the *Nafahāt*.⁴³

The above narrative can also be divided into two halves: at first, the diffident Junayd receives confirmation from the Prophet that he should establish his own teaching sessions; subsequently, in his first teaching session, he receives a question from a Christian youth concerning a hadith which is specifically about miraculous insight (*firāsa*), to which he responds by showing that he possesses that attribute himself. It is surely no coincidence that the hadith in question is the same one that is provided in the biographies of Junayd in both Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* and the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*.⁴⁴ It had been presented in each of those works simply as the example of a hadith transmission by Junayd, but now it constitutes the focus of a miracle story about him.

Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb* also includes a narrative which describes Junayd as demonstrating his possession of *firāsa* in a teaching session, albeit without actually incorporating the hadith in question.⁴⁵ In that variant the questioner is one of Junayd's own disciples, who tries to test him. The same biography also includes a variant of the first part of the above narrative, which describes Junayd's excitement at receiving the instruction from the Prophet and his subsequent discovery that Saqatī, his teacher, knew about the dream all along. In that particular context, however, it functions to underline Saqatī's pre-eminence over Junayd, as an example of the superiority of teachers over students.⁴⁶ Self-doubt followed by a sign of reassurance at the beginning of one's mission and the outsmarting of doubters and infidels are of course common anecdotal motifs in the biographies of religious authorities in general (including that of the Prophet). In the biographical tradition of Junayd specifically, such motifs appear to have been already consolidated, and continued to be preserved, transmitted and reworked until eventually reaching the extended form of the narrative in the *Nafahāt*.

IV

The introductions of the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd are representative of those provided in the *Nafahāt* for the biographies that correspond to the ones already included in the Persian *Tabaqāt*, in that they are both based closely on their precursors. For instance, the introduction to Junayd is presented below:

The Chief of the sect (*sayyid al-tā'ifa*), Junayd al-Baghdādī

N1 He belongs to the second generation (*az tabaqa-yi thāniya*).

N2 His *kunya* is Abū 'l-Qāsim, while his *laqabs* are Qawārīrī, Zajjāj, and Khazzāz. He was called Qawārīrī and Zajjāj because his father used to sell glass. According to Yafī'ī's *Tā'rikh*, Khazzāz is written with a dotted *khā'* and a doubled and repeated *zā'*. He was called Khazzāz because he traded in silk.

N3 His family origins (*aṣl*) are from Nihavand and the place where he was born (*mawlid*) and brought up (*mansha'*) is Baghdad.

N4 He followed the law school (*madhhab*) of Abū Thawr, Shāfi'ī's best student. It has also been said that he followed the law school of Sufyān Thawrī.

N5 He was a companion (*ṣuḥbat dāshit*) and student (*shāgird*) of Sarī Saqatī, Hārith Muḥāsibī and Muḥammad Qaṣṣāb.

N6 He is one of the leaders (*ayimma*) and chiefs (*sādāt*) of this group (the Sufis). Everyone links himself back to [Junayd] (*nisbat bi-way durust kunand*), like Kharrāz, Ruwaym, Shiblī and others.

N7 Abū 'l-'Abbās 'Aṭā says, Our leader (*imām*) in this science (*'ilm*), and the authority to whom we refer (*marja'*) and whom we imitate (*muqtadā*), is Junayd.

N8 The Caliph of Baghdad said to Ruwaym, Hey ill-mannered one! He said, Can I be ill-mannered if I have spent half a day in the company of Junayd? This means that anyone who has spent half a day in his company cannot be ill-mannered, how then for longer?⁴⁷

N9 Shaykh Abū Ja'far Ḥaddād says, If intellect (*'aql*) were a man it would be in the form of Junayd.

N10 The following has been said: There have been three peerless ones from this generation (*tabaqa*): Junayd in Baghdad, Abū 'Abdullāh Jallā in Syria and Abū 'Uthmān Hīrī in Nishapur.

N11 He passed away in the year 297, according to the *Kitāb al-Tabaqāt* and *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, but according to Yāfi'ī's *Ta'rīkh* he died in the year [2]98. It has also been said that [it was] in the year 299. God knows best.

(N, 79.7–80.2)⁴⁸

The introduction of the biography of Junayd in the *Nafahāt* repeats most of the material in the corresponding introduction provided in the Persian *Tabaqāt* (much of which was derived originally from Sulamī's '*Kitāb Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*'),⁴⁹ whilst also including additional material from 'Yafi'ī's *Ta'rīkh*', namely the *Mir'āt al-janān*.⁵⁰ Elements N7 and N8 are originally found in the body of the biography of Junayd in the Persian *Tabaqāt*, rather than in the introduction. They appear in that work amongst interpolations of general statements about Junayd, which had accumulated towards the beginning of the body of the biography, and seem to have been intended for its introduction instead, since they would be more appropriate there.⁵¹ (They were perhaps interpolated sloppily, or became displaced during growth). Their relocation in the *Nafahāt* to the introduction of the biography has the effect of turning them into 'factual' details,⁵² like his name and origins. In this way, Junayd's intelligence (*'aql*) and his authority as a source of reference (*marja'*) and a role model (*muqtadā*) are presented in a more appropriate context as established credentials.

The introduction to Abū Yazīd, which is presented below, contains only a couple of discrepancies with its precursor in the Persian *Tabaqāt*:

Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī

N1 He belongs to the first generation (*tabaqa-yi 'ūlā*).

N2 His name is Ṭayfūr b. 'Isā b. Ādam b. Surūshān.

N3 His grandfather was a Magian who became a Muslim.

N4 Bāyazīd was a companion (*az aqrān*) of Aḥmad Khadrawayh, Abū Ḥafṣ and Yaḥyā Mu'ādh, and he had seen Shaqīq Balkhī.

N5 His death was in the year 261. It has also been said [that it was] in the year 234. The former is more correct.

N6 His teacher (*ustādh*) was a Kurd. Out of reverence for the teacher, [Bāyazīd] instructed in his will, Dig my grave lower than that of my teacher!

N7 He was a Hanafite (*az aṣḥāb-i ra'y*), but a [station of] sainthood opened up before him in which school allegiance (*madhhab*) was not apparent.

(N, 54.14–21)

The most conspicuous difference between the introductions in the two works is that two elements of the version in the Persian *Tabaqāt* are relocated in the *Nafahāt* (N6 and N7) to a position after the mention of Abū Yazīd's death, rather than before it.⁵³ The first of these elements, N6, relates to Abū Yazīd's burial, so its juxtaposition after the mention of the date of his death makes it an expansion of that detail. The second of these elements, N7, which has been relocated to the very end of the introduction, alludes to the question of Abū Yazīd's apparent failure to conform to a law-school (*madhhab*), suggesting that if this may have appeared to be the case it was only because of his lofty mystical station, thereby implicitly excusing him. This is immediately followed by the previously cited passage from the beginning of the body of the biography, which also alludes to a controversial aspect of Abū Yazīd's biographical tradition and absolves him, in that instance by asserting that illegitimate claims have been falsely attributed to him. In view of the immediately subsequent material, the position of N7 therefore also seems appropriate.

The comparison that has been made between the the Persian *Tabaqāt* and the corresponding portion of Jāmi's *Nafahāt* has highlighted the way in which the earlier work was redacted for Jāmi's purposes. In summary, the incoherencies and points of disjuncture in that organic text have usually been tidied up and smoothed over – the most problematic material is usually left out while much of the material that is retained is altered in order to give greater coherency and cohesion. An effort to be concise is also

apparent, both in the selection of material to be included in a particular biography and in its adaptation. For instance, most of the addenda in the earlier work, that is those segments in a biography which are actually about someone other than the subject himself, are omitted altogether. Moreover, as one might expect, Jāmī, who was writing in the fifteenth century, often employs more contemporary expressions in his reworkings of the material at his disposal, and he also incorporates additional material from more recent sources.

V

In the introduction to the *Nafahāt al-uns*, Jāmī presents the work as a continuation of a literary tradition which originated with Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*,⁵⁴ and was introduced into the Persian tradition in the form of its namesake which is traditionally ascribed to Anṣārī. In the following passage, he offers an account of the relationship between those eleventh century precursors:

His Holiness *Shaykh al-Islām*, the shelter for mankind, the protector of the *sunna*, the preventer of innovation, Abū Ismā'īl 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī 'l-Harawī dictated (*imlā*) that (Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*) in sessions (*majālis*) with companions and assemblies (*majāmi'*) in which he would advise and admonish. He added to it further utterances belonging to some shaykhs (*mashāyikh*) who had not been mentioned in that book, and also some of his own mystical experiences and inspirations (*adhwāq wa mawājīd*). One of his devotees and disciples collected them (the dictations) and compiled them into a book (*yakī az muḥibbān wa murīdān ān-rā jam' mīkarda wa dar qayd-i kitābat miyāwurdā*).

(N, 2.1-5)

My own study of the relationship between Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* and its Persian namesake shows that, whilst the account of their relationship in the above passage may be a fair inference from a superficial reading of the texts, it is in fact inaccurate.⁵⁵ One can safely assume that an author who had examined the two works as closely as Jāmī evidently has would also have realised that the relationship between them is more complex than he has suggested here.⁵⁶ It should therefore be remembered that Jāmī was not a

disinterested commentator, without any motive for emphasising that Sulamī's work was the basis for that ascribed to Anṣārī. In fact, after making the above assertion, Jāmī subsequently points out that the *Nafahāt* is based directly on the Persian *Tabaqāt*, and thereby implies that his own work is ultimately based on Sulamī's oldest example of the genre and must consequently be authoritative.⁵⁷ In spite of this, Jāmī's account of the relationship between the two precursors to his own *Nafahāt*, rather than the implications of the way in which he actually uses them both, has determined the opinion of most modern scholars.

In the continuation of the above passage taken from the main introduction of the *Nafahāt*, Jāmī offers his own explanation of the way in which he has redacted the Persian *Tabaqāt*:

Truly that (the Persian *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*) is a fine book and a noble collection, containing the truths of Sufi gnosis and the subtle intricacies of this sect. However, since it is written in the old language of Herat (*zabān-i Harawī-yi qadīm*), which was used at that time, and has now reached the state, where, on account of the errors and the alterations of scribes (*taḥṣīf wa tahrīf-i niwīsandagān*) many sections are difficult to understand, and since it is also limited (*muqtaṣar*) in its mention of some early members (*mutaqaddimān*) and fails to mention other [early] members, His Holiness *Shaykh al-Islām* himself, his contemporaries (*mu'āṣirān*) and the later members (*muta'akhkhirān*), I have many times thought about trying to redact it (*tahrīr wa taqrīr*), in accordance with my ability and endurance, by:

- 1 conveying whatever is comprehensible with a well-known contemporary expression;
- 2 leaving whatever is incomprehensible behind the veil of concealment;
- 3 embroidering, on the 'tablet of clarification' (*lawh-i tabyīn*), selected utterances and proven pieces of gnosis which have been attached to them, from other esteemed books;
- 4 adding to the above the explanation of the states (*ahwāl*), stations (*maqāmāt*), gnosis (*ma'ārif*), miracles (*karāmāt*), and dates of birth and death of a group who are not mentioned in that book.

(N, 2.5-14)

Jāmī justifies his composition of the *Nafahāt* by asserting that a redaction of the *Ṭabaqāt* was needed for the following reasons: because it is composed in an archaic form of Persian; because it contains errors and alterations that have been made by scribes (*taṣḥīf wa tahrīf*); and because he considers it both incomplete (lacking the biographies of some of the earlier Sufis, as well as adequate material about those that are included) and outdated (lacking the biographies of the later Sufis, including Anṣārī himself).

This account of his method of redaction corresponds largely to the conclusions reached by a comparison of the two works. However, whilst Jāmī implies that he only leaves out the 'incomprehensible' material, that is not always the case. The use of material from Abū Yazīd's biography in the *Ṭabaqāt*, for instance, shows that material was extracted in order from the beginning of the biography, and that its final segments were all (indiscriminately) omitted once a sufficient total had been reached. Jāmī perhaps did not wish to declare that conciseness was also a concern for him, lest his own work be considered deficient.

In the above passage Jāmī divides the Sufis of the past into three broad chronological groups:

- i) the early members (*mutaqaddimān*)
- ii) Anṣārī and his contemporaries (*mu'āṣirān*)
- iii) the later members (*muta'akhkhirān*)

The Sufis included in the Persian *Ṭabaqāt* represent the *mutaqaddimān*, and thus all of them belong to a single chronological group from Jāmī's (fifteenth century) perspective. The subsequent biographies in the *Nafahāt* must therefore represent the two latter chronological groups – Anṣārī and his contemporaries (*mu'āṣirān*), and the later members (*muta'akhkhirān*). The three of them represent the three sections into which the main sequence of the *Nafahāt* is divided for the purpose of the present analysis.

The first section, represented by the redaction of the Persian *Ṭabaqāt*, has already been identified as beginning with Abū Hāshim (the first biography in the *Nafahāt*) and ending with Daqqāq. However, the point of demarcation between the second and third sections, representing Anṣārī and his contemporaries and the later Sufis respectively, is less easily defined. The most obvious point is at the start of the first of a series of coeval clusters of juxtaposed biographies, each of which represents Sufis living between the

twelfth and fifteenth centuries (*muta'akhkhirān*). The first cluster represents the Naqshbandī Sufi order from the twelfth century until Jāmī's own time. The biographies that intervene between this cluster and the preceding biography of Daqqāq should therefore represent Anṣārī and his contemporaries (*mu'āṣirān*). Appropriately, they consist of the biographies of Sufis living between the late tenth and the late eleventh centuries, including that of Anṣārī himself.⁵⁸

VI

It seems worthwhile to present at this point a sketch of the organisational framework of the groups representing the later Sufis. Although they represent periods that are not depicted by any of the earlier works of the same genre, nonetheless they may serve to illustrate the organisational principles applied in the *Nafahāt* 'independently' of its main precursors. Whilst every effort has been made to include only the necessary details here, it will be considerably easier to follow this broad outline by referring to the text itself, or at least to the diagrams provided in the appendix of this book.

An allusion has already been made to the existence within the *muta'akhkhirān* section of clusters representing distinct sub-groups, such as the members of a Naqshbandi line of Sufism from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. In fact, the *muta'akhkhirān* group includes the following eight clusters which account for the majority of its constituent biographies:

- 3.1 The Naqshbandi cluster
- 3.2 The 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī cluster
- 3.3 The cluster beginning with Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī
- 3.4 The Jalāl al-Dīn al-Balkhī (Rumi) cluster
- 3.5 The cluster beginning with Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī
- 3.6 The 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (Gīlānī) cluster
- 3.7 The Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī cluster
- 3.8 The Persian poets' cluster

The biographies in clusters 3.1, 3.3 and 3.5 each depict a Sufi line of transmission extending as far as a contemporary of Jāmī who lived in the vicinity of Herat, and they account for the majority of the biographies in the *muta'akhkhirān* section. Clusters 3.2, 3.4, 3.6

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and 3.7 consist, in turn, of the biographies of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Balkhī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (al-Gīlānī) and Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī, together with their respective associates – one specific individual represents the focus of each of these clusters. The final cluster (3.8) contains the biographies of poets who wrote in Persian.

Returning to the Naqshbandi cluster, the sequence of nineteen biographies beginning with that of Yūsuf Hamadānī (d.535/1140) and culminating with that of 'Ubaydullāh Aḥrār (d.896/1490) represents a line of succession of the Naqshbandi order, to which Jāmī himself belonged (see Fig.2). Two of the biographies in this cluster provide nothing more than a statement declaring that the subject was the successor of the person whose biography immediately precedes, implying that the principal objective was to structure a cohesive and complete Sufi lineage.⁵⁹

Although most of the Sufis listed in this cluster are named as successors of the immediately preceding ones, the diachronic succession is disturbed at three points, such as when biographies have been incorporated that are entirely made up of material about the subject of a juxtaposed biography.⁶⁰ The linear succession is also disturbed where the line branches into two, after the death of Naqshband.⁶¹

Khwāja 'Ubaydullāh Aḥrār is introduced as the representative of the so-called *Khwājagān* tradition of Sufism in Jāmī's time.⁶² His biography is followed by the unique provision of a conclusion to the whole cluster, in which the tradition is glorified.⁶³ For instance, the following four lines of verse close this cluster, in the first hemistich of which they are referred to by the name *Naqshbandiyya*:

The *Naqshbandiyya* are such amazing caravan leaders
That they take the caravan through a hidden route to the
haram.

(N, 417.5–8)

The position in which the Naqshbandi cluster has been included, as the first of the coeval clusters amongst the *muta'akhkhirān*, not to mention its unique possession of glorification of the lineage, testifies to the allegiance of Jāmī himself to this school of Sufism, even though he does not explicitly acknowledge his own links to the order. Whilst he fails to mention that he was Kāshgharī's student and son-in-law, towards the end of the biography of

'Ubaydullāh Aḥrār in one manuscript it is asserted that Jāmī was a student of the latter's deputy in Bukhārā, and was thereby linked to the individual whom he himself describes as the supreme representative of the Naqshbandi order in his own day.⁶⁴

Whilst the Naqshbandi cluster may have been given special attention by Jāmī, the other line of transmission clusters nonetheless possess many similar features. For instance, the sequence of thirty biographies between those of Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d.563/1167) and Shams al-Dīn Asad (d.864/1459) similarly structure a line of transmission from the twelfth until the fifteenth century, whilst also including biographies that present material relevant to the subject of a juxtaposed biography (see Fig.3).⁶⁵ This cluster also depicts an eventual split into alternative lines of transmission. For instance, whilst the last four members depict transmission as far as the aforementioned Asad, they are preceded by an alternative line of transmission extending as far as Fakhr al-Dīn Lūristānī (d.820/1417), whom Jāmī claims to have met in his childhood.⁶⁶ The fourteen biographies which make up the cluster that begins with Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d.632/1234) and culminates with Shams al-Dīn al-Kusū'ī al-Jāmī (d.863/1459) follows similar patterns in the process of structuring a complete and cohesive lineage (see Fig.4).

The clusters that are focused on one important individual are best exemplified by the relatively uncluttered example which is focused on Jalāl al-Dīn al-Balkhī, better known today as Rumi. It consists of seven members, beginning with Rumi's father Bahā' al-Dīn Walad and culminating with Rumi's son, Sulṭān Walad. His own biography, which is the longest in this cluster,⁶⁷ is preceded not only by that of his father, but also by that of his teacher after the latter's death, namely Burhān al-Dīn Muḥaqqiq.⁶⁸ Rumi himself is followed immediately by his celebrated soul-mate and the inspiration behind much of his literary output, namely Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī.⁶⁹ Tabrīzī is followed by two disciples of Rumi,⁷⁰ and finally the latter's son Sulṭān Walad (d.712/1312), who is said to have studied at the feet of all of the previously listed members apart from his own grandfather (presumably because that would have been impossible).⁷¹

The clusters centred around the biographies of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (al-Gīlānī) and Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī are each structured on the basis of a similar pattern to that of the Rumi cluster, naming the teachers as

well as a couple of generations of the students of their respective 'key members'. They also include biographies that serve simply to provide further information about the key member. For instance, the final two biographies in the 'Ayn al-Qudāt cluster are made up almost entirely of quotations of the latter.⁷²

The final eleven members of the main sequence of biographies in the *Nafahāt* constitute the cluster of Persian poets. They are listed in approximately chronological order,⁷³ but some of them are juxtaposed only because their subjects are associated with each other.⁷⁴ The subject of the first biography of this cluster, Ḥakīm Sanā'ī (d.ca.525/1131) is introduced as a disciple of Yūsuf Hamadānī (d.535/1140), the first member of the Naqshbandī cluster.⁷⁵ In this way, the whole cluster of Sufi poets is implicitly linked back to the same tradition of Sufism as Jāmī, who himself combined his Sufi affiliation with the composition of highly-esteemed Persian poetry.

The very last biography in the main sequence of the *Nafahāt* is that of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiz, arguably the last great Persian poet before Jāmī himself.⁷⁶ It is remarkably brief, but this is explained as being only on account of the fact that he is already very famous.⁷⁷ Jāmī concedes that it is unknown whether Ḥāfiz was himself a Sufi or not, but he explains that his poetry is always used by Sufis, and has even been formally approved by a member of the Naqshbandī line.⁷⁸

The inclusion of this cluster at all in a work of the Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre is an innovation influenced by Jāmī's own participation in the tradition of Persian poetry. He appears to have wished to include his precursors in this field, but found it impossible to integrate them into an earlier part of the framework of the *Nafahāt*. They have therefore been tagged on at the end as a separate cluster, whilst every effort is made to attribute to them collectively a link back to his own Naqshbandī tradition of Sufism.

VII

In summary, the biography of Daqqāq represents the end of the first section of biographies in the *Nafahāt*, that of the *mutaqaddimān*, which covers the eighth until the eleventh century. The biography of Yūsuf Hamadānī represents the beginning of the third section, that of the *muta'akhkhirān*, which covers the twelfth until the

thirteenth century. The portion of the main sequence of biographies between these two points is accounted for by the biographies of Anṣārī and his contemporaries (*mu'āṣirān*), living between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This intermediary section bridges the gap between the later members (*muta'akhkhirān*) and the authoritative earlier members (*mutaqaddimān*), whilst at the same time it includes the most important contemporaries of Anṣārī. The framework thereby depicts a continuous transmission of the tradition, from the first generations to the contemporaries of Jāmī. A diversity of medieval Sufi orders and outstanding personalities are thus presented as the heirs of the Prophet, by transmission through the contemporaries of Anṣārī, the earlier members (*mutaqaddimān*) and the *salaf*.

The cohesiveness of the pattern of succession that is structured is further enhanced by means of the attribution of specific links between individual members of the three sections. For instance, Yūsuf Hamadānī, the first member of the Naqshbandī cluster, is said to have a 'well-known' Sufi link with Abū 'Alī Fārmadī (d.477/1084), who is one of the final members of the *mu'āṣirān*.⁷⁹ Similarly Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī, and through him his nephew Shihāb al-Dīn, are linked back to Aḥmad Ghazālī (d.520/1126).⁸⁰ These individual associations have the effect of linking back the entire Sufi lineage clusters headed by each of these three representatives of the *muta'akhkhirān* (and extending as far as a contemporary of Jāmī) back to the *mu'āṣirān*.

The biographies of Fārmadī and Ghazālī play key roles in the enhancement of cohesion between the three broad chronological groups, because they themselves are linked back in a similar fashion ultimately to representatives amongst the *mutaqaddimān*. Fārmadī derives his authority in Sufism (*intisāb-i way dar taṣawwuf*) from two individuals, namely, Abū 'l-Qāsim Gurgānī and Abū 'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī, who are both amongst the first members of the *mu'āṣirān*. Aḥmad Ghazālī is said to have been a disciple of the subject of the biography which immediately precedes his own, namely Abū Bakr al-Nassāj (d.487/1094), who, in turn, is described as an associate of Gurgānī.⁸¹ It is particularly significant that Kharaqānī and Gurgānī should have been chosen as the ones to whom the later generations are linked back, for each of them is attributed with a Sufi lineage in the introduction of his own biography.

Shaykh Abū 'l-Hasan's (Kharāqānī) Sufi lineage (*intisāb*) goes back to 'the sultan of the gnostics' (*sultān al-ʿarīfīn*) Shaykh Abū Yazīd Bastāmī. His training in Sufi conduct (*tarbiyat-i ʿishān dar sulūk*) was from the spirituality (*rūhāniyyat*) of Abū Yazīd. Shaykh Abū 'l-Hasan's birth was a while after the death of Shaykh Abū Yazīd.

(N, 303.18-20)

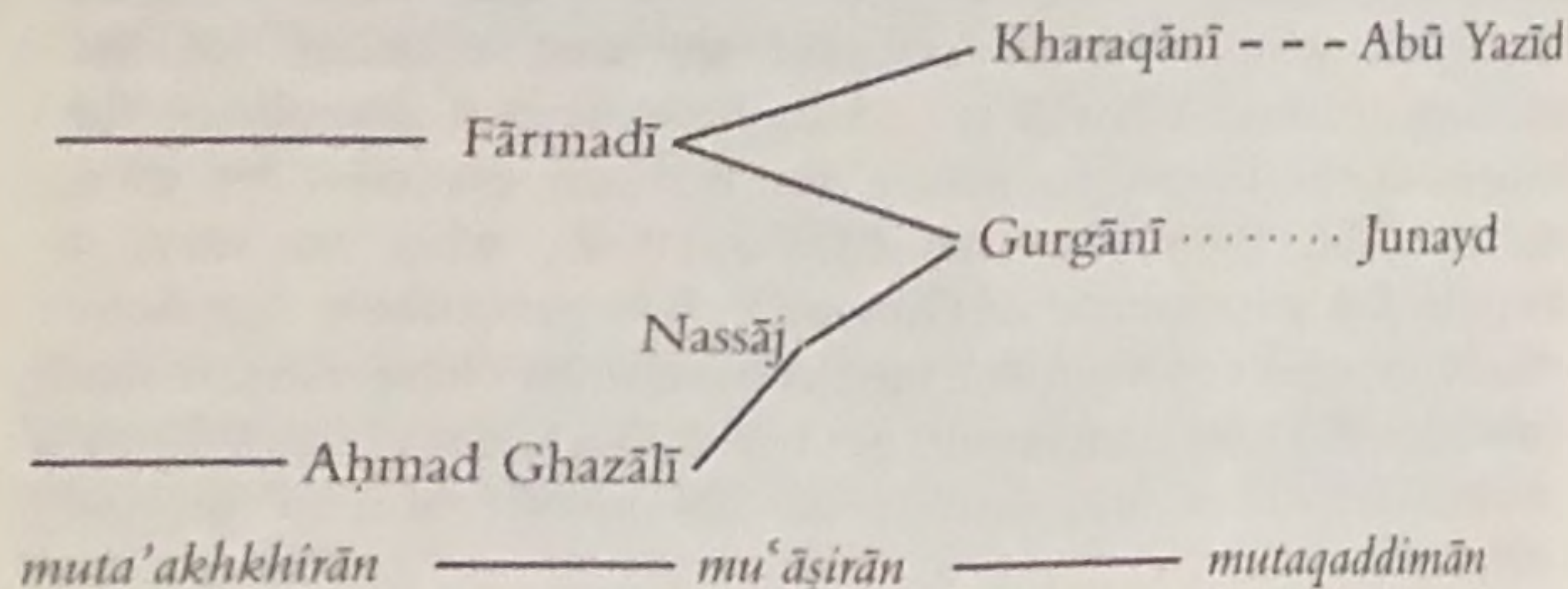
Kharāqānī (d.425/1034) was born after Abū Yazīd (d. 261/875) had died, yet he is linked directly back to this illustrious member of the *mutaqaddimān* through the latter's 'spirituality' (*rūhāniyyāt*), presumably referring to his influence beyond the grave.

Gurgānī's (d.469/1076) Sufi lineage is traced, through a sequence of three intermediaries, whose lives appropriately overlapped, back as far as Junayd:

His lineage (*nisbat*) reaches, by three intermediaries (*wāsiṭa*), namely Shaykh Abū 'Uthmān Maghribī, Shaykh Abū 'Alī Kātib and Shaykh Abū 'Alī Rūdbārī, to 'the chief of the sect' (*sayyid al-tāyifa*), Junayd.

(N, 312.14-16)

As mentioned above, the link between the *muta'akhhirān* biographies and the *mu'āsirān* which leads to Kharāqānī does so through Abū 'Alī Fārmadī, who is associated at the same time with Gurgānī. This 'double affiliation' is perhaps due to the nature of Kharāqānī's relationship with Abū Yazīd; Gurgānī's complete chain of transmission back to Junayd reinforces the value of association with Fārmadī, as shown in the following diagrammatic summary of the aforementioned links.



The *mu'āsirān* group thus fulfils its bridging role by providing, at its culmination, links to the *muta'akhhirān*, and at its start, links back to the *mutaqaddimān*, who are represented by our two heroes Abū Yazīd and Junayd. Whilst Junayd had already been depicted, as far back as the first work of the *tabaqāt* genre, as the most authoritative representative of the early generations, the same cannot be said for Abū Yazīd. In the framework of the *Nafahāt*, however, his biography plays a similar role to that of Junayd, as an authoritative 'common-link' amongst the *mutaqaddimān* on whom the chains of transmission of later generations converge.⁸² This testifies not only to the fact that his status had been consolidated as authoritative by the late fifteenth century, but also that his reputation had even surpassed that of his rivals amongst his contemporaries, who had been considered more eminent by most of Jāmi's precursors.⁸³

It has already been observed in the study of earlier writings of the *tabaqāt* genre that the allegiances and predilections of the author (or the tradition that produced the works) are indicated by their organisational framework. The biographies representing that allegiance most directly are usually those of the latest members of the tradition and are included at the end, as the culmination of the past of Sufism. For instance, in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, the culmination takes the form of the final generation of biographies. Since such generations are hierarchical, the first biographies to be listed within them are the most instructive with regard to his allegiances and predilections. The framework of the *Nafahāt* is comparable to that of Sulamī's work, since Jāmi's immediate predecessors are included as members of the series of coeval clusters representing the *muta'akhhirān*. The provision of these coeval clusters in the *Nafahāt* parallels the provision of the biographies of immediate predecessors in Sulamī's final generation. Just as the first members of those generations are the most important, so too the first of the coeval clusters to be presented is the most significant, namely the Naqshbandi cluster which represents Jāmi's own tradition of Sufism. Whilst in the *Tabaqāt* the length of the head biographies is also an indication of their pre-eminence, in the *Nafahāt* this is indicated by the Naqshbandi cluster's unique possession of praise and glorification of their tradition.

Jāmi can therefore be seen to have applied the same principles for the framework of the *Nafahāt* as had been applied in the works

of his predecessors. Unlike them, he lived at a time after Sufi orders had become established, and each had produced biographical literature devoted exclusively to the predecessors of their own specific order, many examples of which have been used by Jāmī for his more comprehensive project.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, Jāmī manages to integrate his selection of Sufi lineages, as well as further eminent individuals of later times, by representing them in the form of clusters of biographies, each of which is linked back to the earlier Sufi authorities. The authority of those Sufis living before the eleventh century had been established by the earlier *tabaqāt* works. Therefore, they were depicted by Jāmī in the late fifteenth century, as the solid foundation which bolsters the authority of the diversity of later traditions that he decided to include in his relatively broad definition of Sufism.

Conclusion

Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but it is actually the suggestive ground of process in which the present is rooted.

(H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and method*, p.204)

The *tabaqāt* writings which have been examined in this study display close inter-relationships with each other at every structural level, from their overall organisational frameworks to the specific segments of biographical material that have been passed down through the tradition in differing guises. For instance, vestiges of the organisational framework of Sulamī's early eleventh century *Tabaqāt al-Sufiyya* are still discernible in Jāmī's late fifteenth century *Nafahāt al-uns*. Furthermore, the latter's methods of arrangement for the biographies of Sufis living after the twelfth century follow the same principles as Sulamī's foundational generation system, and his biographical segments fulfil similar functions, albeit in a manner appropriate for the new historical context.

The arrangement of biographies in each of the six *tabaqāt* writings depicts an overall linear time-span, culminating with the biographies of the immediate predecessors of the author (or the person to whom the text is traditionally ascribed). Although they depict the time-span in a chronological order, all of them are back-readings. That is, from the standpoint of the time when the works were produced, their organisational frameworks serve to trace a route from as far back as a generation of predecessors whose authority is already established in tradition. Those works which

appear to be under the control of a single author offer the most cohesive and ordered frameworks for this task of asserting the unbroken transmission of the tradition from the beginnings of Islam.

The functions of the *tabaqāt* genre are highlighted most clearly when they are juxtaposed next to contrasting genres as part of the same literary work. In both Qushayrī's *Risāla* and Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb*, the *tabaqāt* sections serve to buttress the authority of subsequent accounts of Sufi theory and practice. In the former work, it is followed immediately by a section which is introduced as having been designed specifically for the benefit of the initiated. In the latter work, it is closely related to an account of the differences of opinion amongst Sufis regarding contentious aspects of their doctrine. The relationship between the respective *tabaqāt* sections and the sections which are juxtaposed after them is comparable to that between an *isnād* (chain of authority) and the *matn* (text) which it supports. The other *tabaqāt* writings also have a *matn* to which they give support; the culmination of their frameworks at the immediate predecessors of the assumed authors would suggest that they serve to buttress the authority of the tradition of Sufism that produced them.

The selection of biographies to be included in a *tabaqāt* work is a way of indicating a definition of the tradition whose past is being represented, in that it structures a diachronic community, the parameters of whose identity are demarcated by the characteristics of its individual members. Both the established reputations of these members as well as the actual way in which they are now portrayed shape this definition. Amongst the Sufi *tabaqāt* writings under the control of a single author, the *tabaqāt* section of Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb*, by its deliberate inclusion of jurists and controversial mystics alike, offers the most accommodating parameters. This is in keeping with the overall character of that work. On the other hand, the *tabaqāt* section of Qushayrī's *Risāla* offers a contrastingly narrow definition of Sufism; it not only excludes the controversial Ḥallāj, but it portrays the Sufis who are included as little more than traditionalist pietists, even at the cost of omitting many of the characteristics with which they had previously been described in source works. This is in keeping with its expressed agenda.

The order in which the members of the diachronic community depicted in a *tabaqāt* work are listed may also be instructive with regards to the priorities of the author. For instance, Sulamī's

arrangement of biographies in successive generations allows a hierarchical method of ordering the members of the same generation. In this way, he manages to promote a tradition centred on Junayd as the pre-eminent tradition of Sufism. Sulamī's generation system forms the basis of the representations of the past of Sufism as far as the eleventh century in the frameworks of all the later Sufi *tabaqāt* writings. Jāmī's depiction of Sufis living after the twelfth century is similar to this, in that it includes clusters of biographies which depict Sufi lineages, each spanning the same period. The first coeval cluster of this kind to be presented is that of his own tradition, the Naqshbandī order, which is thereby given precedence over all the competing traditions.

The majority of the component segments of the biographies seem to have been produced originally in an oral teaching situation. Furthermore their earliest presentation in literary works suggests that they already had an extended history, and may even have been preserved in the form of notes prior to compilation. Such a context for the generation and transmission of segments facilitated the frequent inclusion of variant utterances and recurrence of anecdotal topoi, as well as confusion in many instances over the identity of the individual to whom the dicta and deeds should be attributed. One need look no further than the biographical traditions of Abū Yazīd and Junayd to observe such features, including the recurrence of the same anecdotal topoi in both biographies and the attribution of variants of the same utterance to each of them. And this is in spite of the fact that in later depictions they represent opposite types of mysticism.

A comparison of the presentation of biographical segments in the *tabaqāt* works considered indicates that they are creatively re-worked through time. As we have seen, the modifications vary from the omission of seemingly insignificant detail to the transformation of whole segments, resulting in entirely different messages being conveyed from their earlier variants. Whilst some of the modifications may seem negligible in isolation, the new context in which they are presented is what needs to be taken into consideration. For instance, Qushayrī's *Risāla* is a work which follows a particular agenda that is evident at every level of its structure.

Segments may also be transformed significantly in form only in order to convey the same message more effectively for a new generation of readers. This is best illustrated by the combination of

originally discrete segments to form the extended narratives that are presented in Jāmi's *Nafahāt*. In one case a hadith transmission attributed to Junayd in earlier biographies becomes an integral part of a miracle story – hadith transmissions had been surpassed by miracle stories by this time as evidence for the authenticity of Sufi.

Biographical segments become transformed not only through successive works, but also within the same work when that has undergone an extended period of growth. Whilst on the one hand the organic nature of such works raises questions about the dating and authenticity of their contents, it also provides an invaluable insight into the dynamic process of re-forming the past by the ongoing school traditions. The biographies of the most important figures of the past (from the viewpoint of the tradition that produced them) are particularly valuable in this regard, for they have been reworked to the greatest degree precisely because of their continued influence.

The effects of growth, interpolation and successive redactions in organic works, such as the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Šūfiyya* and the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, can be witnessed at every level of their structure, from the extended development of component segments to the competing organisational principles in their overall frameworks. Perhaps the most conspicuous indication lies in the inappropriate position of many introductions of biographies in the surviving forms of the works – after a process of growth and interpolation, as well as successive redactions, they are sometimes found strangely out of context. The Persian *Ṭabaqāt* has already generated an explanation in the tradition itself for its incoherent and organic form, but the *Hilya* shares several of its characteristics, albeit to a less emphatic degree. It also merits classification as an organic text that underwent an extended period of growth beyond the death of the individual to whom it is attributed.

Each of the major *ṭabaqāt* writings of the Sufi tradition may seem at first sight to be little more than a repository of facts about the lives of its subjects, but on closer inspection none of them suggests a concern for the preservation and transmission of material in its original form. That is to say, rather than being concerned about historical facts, they display a perpetual creativity in their individual re-workings of the past, which is evident in the selection and arrangement, as well as the modification of the material obtained from precursors. The perception of works of this genre by positivist historians as repositories of factual information

therefore appears to be short-sighted and inappropriate. *Ṭabaqāt* works are too sophisticated for such a superficial reading, which is deceptively convenient for those who seek instant 'facts'.

The form and content of the works examined in this analysis support the suggestions in recent theories of historiography that any depiction of the past is inseparable from the present life of its author, and that the actual occurrence of the author's re-collection of the past is of greater historical significance than the content of his description. As products of the 'labour and savoir-faire'¹ of the individuals and school traditions which compiled them, *ṭabaqāt* works remain invaluable as sources for the time in which they were produced. A degree of scepticism towards their historical value for the past which they describe therefore, far from negating the value of one of the most prolific genres of medieval Islamic literature, opens up the possibility of a re-orientation towards their value as sources for the contexts of their own formation.

The *ṭabaqāt* works considered here may serve to demonstrate emphatically that Sufism shared with the other main traditions of Muslim scholarship in the pre-modern period 'a concept of authority based upon precedent'.² That is not to say that past models were necessarily imitated slavishly generation after generation, but rather that the developing traditions, including Sufism, sought support and legitimation through creative appeals to precedent, in that the present context often provided '[both] the impetus and the desired results'.³ The Sufi *ṭabaqāt* genre therefore represents a dynamic hermeneutical process, which can serve as an indicator of the vitality of Sufism in different historical periods;⁴ it informs of the tradition's ability to continue to find significance in the past, repeatedly recalling and re-forming it for its present needs. As Paul Ricoeur has commented:

'The past is not *passé* for our future is guaranteed precisely by our ability to possess a narrative identity, to recollect the past in historical or fictive form'.⁵

Notes

Introduction

- ¹ See Auchterlonie, *Arabic biographical dictionaries*; Gilliot, 'tabakāt' in EI²; Hafsi, 'Recherches'; Heffening, 'tabakāt' in EI¹.
- ² The works of Richard Bulliet exemplify this approach (e.g. see his *Patricians of Nishapur*).
- ³ Wansbrough, *Res ipsa loquitur*, 10. More specifically, see Roy Mottahedeh's review of Bulliet's *Patricians*, and Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 198–9. See further, Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, esp. 1–14; Waldman, *Historical Narrative*, 3–25.
- ⁴ The Sufi manuals that were written prior to these two works, despite containing a certain amount of biographical material, do not contain *tabaqāt* sections as such. See al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma'*; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*; al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf*.
- ⁵ See pp 65–7 below.
- ⁶ See Ch.4, especially Sections III and IV.
- ⁷ See pp 204, n.13 below.
- ⁸ There are two major collections of Sufi biographies ascribed to authors living before the fifteenth century which are not included in this study, namely Ibn al-Mulaqqin's *Ṭabaqāt al-Awliyā'* and Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* (see bibliography for details). They both differ significantly in structure from the works which are taken into account in this study, in that their biographies are not arranged in a predominantly chronological pattern. Ibn al-Mulaqqin's *Ṭabaqāt*, which lists biographies mostly according to an alphabetical arrangement, represents a western (North African) tradition of Sufi literature, with which Jāmī does not appear to be familiar. 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkira* also does not possess a predominantly chronological organisational framework, and it appears to have been written for literary purposes other than those of the *tabaqāt* genre. This perhaps explains why Jāmī lists it amongst the works ascribed to the Persian poet 'Aṭṭār, in his biography of the latter, but chooses neither to name it as a precursor, nor to use it as a source of material for his *Nafahāt*.

- 9 Whilst I have vocalized this *nisba* here in accordance with recent scholarship (especially in German), in the English tradition the same name has conventionally been vocalized as *Bistāmī*. Most references to this personality in the present work instead employ the *kunya* 'Abū Yazīd', corresponding to the references provided in source works. See further the entry of the *nisba* in al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*.
- 10 Gadamer, *Truth and method*, 301.
- 11 J.A. Mojaddedi, 'Legitimizing Sufism in al-Qushayrī's *Risāla*', *Studia Islamica* 90 (2000), 37-50. See also the list of errata due to be published in the next issue.

Chapter One: Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*

- 1 For a list of the extant works ascribed to Sulamī, see Sezgin, *Geschichte*, I, 671-4.
- 2 See al-Sulamī, *Ādāb al-ṣulḥa*, 1-2.
- 3 al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 248.15-16.
- 4 See Minuvi's remarks on the connotations of *duwayra* in Furuzanfar, *Tarjuma-yi Risāla*, 19, note 1. This term is used for a small monastery which has residents. It may be located within the grounds of a school (*madrasa*). Later tradition attributes to Sulamī a school in which he trained students.
- 5 al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 248.4.
- 6 This *nisba* refers to the Arab tribe *Banū Sulaym*. See al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, VII, 111-3.
- 7 TABS, 476.1-5; 159.1-7.
- 8 See al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 223.21. For information about the *Malāmatiyya*, see De Jong, Algar & Imber, 'al-Malāmatiyya' in EI².
- 9 See Hartmann, 'As-Sulamī's *Risālat al-Malāmatiyya*'.
- 10 See al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, VII, 112.18-113.15.
- 11 Nasrollah Pourjavady has prepared an edition of this text, and included it in his recently published collection of Sulamī's works, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān Sulamī*.
- 12 See further R., 348.3-20, which consists of a narrative in which Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī is instructed by his teacher, Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq, to visit Sulamī and take, without his knowledge, his copy of a work containing poems by al-Husayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Hallāj. Sulamī displays his miraculous insight (*firāsa*), convincing Qushayrī to abandon his plan to fulfil the instruction. The same narrative also refers to criticism about Sulamī's participation in *samā'*. It seems to serve the function of depicting Sulamī as an upholder of controversial views, who is nonetheless proved to be correct by his miraculous powers.
- 13 See the studies by Gerhard Böwering: *The minor Qur'ān commentary*, and 'The Qur'ān commentary of al-Sulamī'.
- 14 Another named work commonly attributed to Sulamī is the so-called *Ta'rikh al-Ṣūfiyya*. This work is not extant, and the references to it offer conflicting impressions; the title is used in many later works (perhaps generically) to refer to the *Ṭabaqāt*, but it is also used to refer to historiographical writings of Sulamī covering periods beyond the scope of that work. In the excellent

- introduction to his edition of the *Ṭabaqāt*, Pedersen discusses these conflicting references in considerable detail (see TABS, Ed.'s Intro., 50-62). His observations seem to suggest that it may be more fruitful to concentrate on the text that has survived, rather than to speculate about the possible form and content of a work that is neither extant, nor referred to in a consistently recognisable fashion.
- 15 This total is reached by counting each of the two instances where two brothers are treated together as constituting a single biography. This is because structurally they each constitute only one biography, with a single heading etc, despite possessing two subjects. Johannes Pedersen, and others following him, reach a total of 105 biographies by counting each of these cases of 'combined biographies' as constituting two separate biographies. See further the next two notes below.
- 16 The second generation section includes one 'combined biography', under a single heading, which is devoted to the brothers Muḥammad and Aḥmad abnā' Abī 'l-Ward (TABS, 246-250).
- 17 Similarly to that observed in the second generation section (see above note), the fifth generation section includes, under one heading, one 'combined biography', which is devoted to the brothers Muḥammad and Ja'far abnā' Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Muqrī. (TABS, 541-546).
- 18 TABS, 5.11-12.
- 19 e.g. TABS, 554.1-4.
- 20 See Rosenthal, *Muslim historiography*, 111.
- 21 TABS, 4.3-5. The problematic nature of the term 'saint' in an Islamic context has already been noted elsewhere: see G.M. Smith & C. Ernst (Eds), *Sainthood in Islam*, especially xi-xxviii.
- 22 See Chaumont, 'al-salaf wa-'l-khalaf' in EI².
- 23 There is no extant copy of a work that fits the description of the *Kitāb al-Zuhd*. Rather, there are only a couple of ambiguous references, in other works of the eleventh century, to historiographical material attributed to Sulamī which may have been contained in such a work. See H, II, 25.8-13; KM, 98.20-99.2. See also TABS, Editor's Intro., 50-62.
- 24 The earliest died in 341/952 (Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī) and the latest in 378/988 (Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Muqrī). For the purposes of illuminating Sulamī's methodology only those dates given by him are taken into account here (and in the following references to time-spans covered by generation sections). The remaining members for whom dates can be obtained from other sources confirm the interpretation being proposed.
- 25 The earliest died in 328/940 (al-Murta'ish) and the latest after 340/951 (Abū 'l-Khayr al-Aqṭa').
- 26 The earliest died in 291/903 (Ibrāhīm al-Khawāṣṣ) and the latest in 330/941 (Abū 'l-Hasan al-Dīnawarī).
- 27 The earliest died in 283/896 (Sahl b. 'Abdullāh al-Tustarī) and the latest in 319/931 (Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl al-Balkhī).
- 28 There is also a considerable overlap between the second and third generations (291/903-319/931), suggesting that there was an abundance of Sufis belonging to this period who proved difficult to classify according to the generation system. It is perhaps the hierarchical facility of Sulamī's generation system which has influenced most the shaping of these two generation

- sections (i.e. crucially maintaining Junayd and Jurayrī as the heads of the respective sections). See below pp.13–15.
- 29 See Dabashi, 'Historical conditions', 171–2.
- 30 See TABS, 386–400.
- 31 See pp.15–16 below concerning the order of biographies in the first generation section. It is an exceptional case because, unlike the other generation sections, all of its members could not possibly have been contemporaries of each other.
- 32 The verb *ṣahiba*, which in other contexts can mean simply 'to accompany', is used consistently in this work to refer to a relationship, through which one acquires authority (as in 'the *ṣahāba*').
- 33 See TABS, 253.11.
- 34 No works ascribed to Abū Thawr have survived, but he is often cited, in literature of the eleventh century, as an authoritative jurist who was associated with Shāfi'ī (see Schacht, 'Abū Thawr' in EI²; Melchert, *Formation*, 71–76). Later he seems to have been confused with Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.161/778) (e.g. see N, 79.13).
- 35 See TABS, Editor's Intro., 21. Pedersen has identified, out of the 105 individuals included (in the 103 biographies – see note 15 above), 59 from Khurasan, 31 from Iraq, 8 from Greater Syria, 5 from Egypt, and one each from Mecca and Qayrawan.
- 36 See pp.61–4 below.
- 37 The biography of Shiblī is more than one and a half times as long as any other biography in the work (See TABS, 340–355).
- 38 TABS, 443.6.
- 39 H, II, 25.14–18.
- 40 See the citation of Norman Calder on p.17 below.
- 41 One manuscript tradition presents the biography of Dhū 'l-Nūn before that of Ibn Adham (see TABS, Editor's Intro., p.5).
- 42 See Bonner, *Aristocratic violence*, 126.
- 43 See Melchert, *Formation*, 3–4.
- 44 TABS, 13.6–7.
- 45 See Cooperson, 'Ibn Hanbal and Bishr al-Hāfi', 71–101.
- 46 Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 571.10–13.
- 47 Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 543.6.
- 48 Bonner, *Aristocratic violence*, 125–134.
- 49 Christopher Melchert has recently made a similar observation, albeit with an alternative interpretation; he has identified Dhū 'l-Nūn as the figure representing the *historical* turning-point from asceticism to mysticism. This attests to an accurate reading of the *Tabaqāt*, but his interpretation of Sulamī's representation of the past as an accurate account of actual historical circumstances, especially with regard to the earliest Sufis, seems to me optimistic. See Melchert, 'Transition', 51–70. See also note 132 below.
- 50 For an account of the portraits of the other early members of Sulamī's first generation section, see Melchert, 'Transition', 52–63.
- 51 See especially pp.130–132 below.
- 52 An English translation of this biography is already available (albeit derived from Massignon's original French translation), in Massignon, *Origins* (Trans. B. Clark), 210–213.

- 53 Calder, 'History and nostalgia', 60. The fulfilment of the process in this specific context can be witnessed in later works. See especially pp.106–7 below, regarding Qushayrī's inclusion of Sulamī in the *tabaqāt* section of his *Risāla*.
- 54 There are forty biographies in this work that do not correspond to this pattern, and this is by virtue of the fact that they lack a hadith transmission. Presumably the subjects of these biographies were not known for transmitting hadiths (see pp.20–21 below concerning the hadith transmission of a biography).
- 55 See note 34 above.
- 56 See Makdisi, *Colleges*, pp.148–52, regarding authorisation to teach law and give *fatwas*.
- 57 The Caliph's New Year's Day' is identified by Abū Rayhān Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/ 1048) as the eleventh day of the month of Hazīrān (Greek calendar), in which 'people in Baghdad splash in the water, strew about dust, and play other games' (see al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 266.10; citation in English from Sachau's translation, *Al-Bīrūnī's chronology of ancient nations*, 258). I owe this reference to Julie Scott Meisami.
- 58 The introduction to Abū Yazīd is actually one of the few that lack this type of information. See note 32 above concerning the use of the verb *ṣahiba*.
- 59 See TABS, 41.3.
- 60 The *isnād* of the first segment in the body of the biography of Muḥāsibī names Junayd as the first transmitter (TABS, 50.2–7).
- 61 The *Tabaqāt* does not contain a biography of Qaṣṣāb, although he is mentioned as an authority with whom two other Sufis associated. In both these cases he is mentioned alongside Saqāṭī, suggesting a special relationship between them in tradition. See TABS, 151.10 (Abū 'l-Husayn al-Nūrī); 186.4–5 (Samnūn b. Ḥamza). There is a biography of Qaṣṣāb in al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 62.
- 62 The introduction to Junayd also associates him with the jurist Abū Thawr, the significance of which has already been discussed on p.14 above.
- 63 See especially Chs 3 and 4 below.
- 64 However, see TABS, Editor's Intro., 40, where he brings to attention the provision of a hadith transmission at the end of one of the biographies, in addition to one located between its introduction and body.
- 65 Eight biographies each contain two hadiths (e.g. the biography of 'Abdullāh b. Khubayq al-Anṭākī, 131.7–132.6). See further TABS, Editor's Intro., 40.
- 66 A translation of the hadith transmission in the biography of Baṣṭāmī is offered in Sells (Ed.) *Early Islamic mysticism*, 235.
- 67 Q, 15.5.
- 68 Although *asnada* often has connotations of tracing the ascription of hadiths, in this context it is used to mean simply 'to transmit'. See further TABS, Editor's Intro. 40–41.
- 69 For information about the transmitters, see al-Sulamī, *Tabaqāt* (Ed. N. Shariba), 156 (notes).
- 70 e.g. See R, 343–53.
- 71 e.g. The hadiths offered in the biography of 'Abdullāh b. Khubayq al-Anṭākī, which are about the creation of a human in the womb, and the Prophet's method of performing ablutions after sexual intercourse (TABS, 131.7–132.6).
- 72 See Rosenthal, *Muslim historiography*, 93–5; Robinson, 'Al-Mu'āfā b. 'Imrān'.
- 73 Corroboration for this assertion is often difficult to find outside of the Sufi

- tradition. In fact, even the reliability of Sulamī himself as a hadith transmitter has been questioned (see al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 248).
- 74 There are significant discrepancies between the texts of Pedersen's and Shariba's editions, especially with regard to the introductions of segments, and they are highlighted in the comparison of the different editors' presentations of this passage. See also Pedersen, 'Quelques remarques', 193-4.
- 75 e.g. TABS, 62.7.
- 76 See Pedersen's quantitative analysis of introductory formulae in the *Tabaqāt* as a whole, as part of the extensive introduction to his edition of the text: TABS, Editor's Intro., 33-38.
- 77 See TABS, 132.6, 371.4.
- 78 TABS, 150.3-8.
- 79 See TABS, Editor's Intro., 42.
- 80 See TABS, Editor's Intro., 43-44, 45-47. I have not had the opportunity to examine the manuscript concerned for myself. In spite of advocating the method of attributing every segment without its own *isnād* back to the preceding *isnād*, Pedersen himself admits that one cannot verify that this interpretation applies in each instance (TABS, Editor's Intro., 44).
- 81 See TABS, 147.6-148.5; 150.3-8.
- 82 e.g. TABS, 142.9-10; 143.5-9.
- 83 e.g. See TABS, 342.4-9 (two segments juxtaposed), but also 345.4-6 (two further segments with the same final tradent). In each of these pairs, the first segments actually possess identical *isnāds*.
- 84 See pp.29-32 below concerning the possible sources of segments.
- 85 The compilation of an author's books by his students is a common phenomenon in medieval Islamic scholarship, and is even the way in which the Sufi tradition itself accounts for the compilation of the (Persian) *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, ascribed to 'Abdullāh Anṣārī (see Ch.3 below). For a recent study of this phenomenon in early *fiqh*, see Calder, *Studies*, Chs 1-5 and Ch.7.
- 86 See p.49 below, concerning 'lengthy prayers'.
- 87 TABS, 64.6-7.
- 88 e.g. TABS, 145.9-11, 146.5-7 in the biography of Junayd.
- 89 See *Jawāmi' ādāb al-Sūfiyya* (Ed. E. Kohlberg) and *Kitāb Ādāb al-ṣuḥba* (Ed. M.J. Kister).
- 90 Consider the following example: 'I sat in my prayer-niche at night and stretched out my leg, and a voice (*ḥatīf*) said to me, He who keeps the company of the kings should do so with fine manners' (TABS, 61.12-62.2).
- 91 See R, 177-183 concerning the use of the term *mujāhida* in Sufi literature of the eleventh century.
- 92 The utterance, *ikhtilāf al-'ulamā' raḥma* had already been projected back as an utterance of the Prophet. See Goldziher, 'ikhtilāf' in EI¹.
- 93 The isolated use of this expression leaves it somewhat open to interpretation. In this specific context, where the focus is scholastic knowledge, it could refer to the theological debate about the nature of divine unity, possibly as a synonym for *ta'tīl* (stripping God of his attributes of unity). In this case, Abū Yazīd would be portrayed as drawing the line for 'acceptable *ikhtilāf*' at the doctrine attributed to the Mu'tazilites, and thus as someone with 'correct' belief according to Ash'arite scholars. This would also not be without relevance for someone remembered as a Hanafite (see p.86 below).

- However, *tajrīd al-tawḥīd* could also be referring to a mystical understanding of divine unity, and therefore be interpreted as excluding either its questionability or its acceptability, depending on whether the 'orthodoxizing' function of the remainder of the utterance is being extended or uncompromisingly qualified by this final clause.
- 94 e.g. See TABS, 62.2-7; 64.12-14; 66.11-67.3.
- 95 See Kinberg, 'Literal dreams', 279-300 (I owe this reference to Andrew Rippin); TABS, Editor's Intro., 38.
- 96 See L, 68-69. The 'witnessings' are described as 'perceptions of the heart (*qalb*) from the unseen (*ghayb*)'.
- 97 See Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, 39.
- 98 See TABS, 147.4-6, as an example of a segment about Junayd, the first tradent of which is Khuldī.
- 99 See further KM, 303-307.
- 100 See further p.50 below.
- 101 For the texts and translations into English of further examples of epistolary material attributed to Junayd, see Abdel-Kader, *Life, personality and writings*.
- 102 Regarding the implications of attributing letters to authoritative individuals in historiographical works, see Noth/Conrad, *Early Arabic historiographical tradition*, 76-87.
- 103 See further pp.29-32 below.
- 104 TABS, 350.11. See also 342.11, 348.7.
- 105 Each of these named individuals is considered worthy of a biography in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*: see TABS, 356-361, 386-391, 392-395. Moreover they are all included in the generation section preceding that of Zajjājī. This anecdote therefore serves to emphasise the latter's authority, by claiming that he was given deference by illustrious and senior 'colleagues'.
- 106 See Makdisi, *Colleges*, 91-3.
- 107 Ibid, 10-11; 17-19.
- 108 Ibid, 12-13; 21-3.
- 109 TABS, 348.6-8.
- 110 TABS, 294.6-7.
- 111 TABS, 340.8.
- 112 See further TABS, Editor's Intro., 33-35.
- 113 e.g. TABS, 105.4-5, 183.9, 500.10, 503.7. Sulamī's father is neither named, nor referred to outside of the context of these *isnāds*.
- 114 TABS, 160.2-3. This phrase is found in the biography of Abū 'Uthmān Sa'īd al-Hīrī, as an explanation of the nature of a transmission by his grandson, Sa'īd b. 'Abdullāh b. Sa'īd b. Ismā'il.
- 115 TABS, 81.5-6.
- 116 With regards to the use of notebooks in the transition between oral and literary culture, see Calder, *Studies*, 171-181. Concerning the implications of the term *kitāb* see pp.61-4 below.
- 117 TABS, 486.5-6. With regards to the implication of 'licence' to transmit (*ijāza*), see Vajda, 'idjāza' in EI², Makdisi, *Colleges*, 143-52 and Calder, *Studies*, 171-4.
- 118 TABS, 490.3-4.
- 119 TABS, 170, cited in TABS, Editor's Intro., 34.
- 120 e.g. See R, 360-367.

- 121 See p.115 below.
 122 See p.31 above concerning this kind of transmission.
 123 TABS, 64.8–11. Two variants of this segment are also found in the corresponding biography in the *Hilyat al-awliya'*: X, 37.14–15; 39.6–8.
 124 TABS, 62.2–3. See also 150.3–5 for a response, attributed to Junayd, to the same question.
 125 TABS, 64.1–3.
 126 TABS, 66.8–10.
 127 See pp.143–6 below.
 128 See Kinberg, 'Literal dreams', 283–292.
 129 The mystical notion of *ma'rifa* is common in ninth century works, but it is traditionally attributed further back to Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (see Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, 35; Massignon, *Essay*, 143).
 130 Melchert, 'Transition', 52–54.
 131 TABS, Editor's Intro., 39–42.
 132 See Bonner, *Aristocratic violence*, 125–134 (I owe this reference to G.R. Hawting); Cooperson, 'Ibn Hanbal and Bishr al-Hāfi', 71–101. Moreover, Melchert's observations, with regards to the biographies of the earliest individuals to be included, does not represent sufficient grounds for the assumption that the *Ṭabaqāt* as a whole 'seldom' suffers from backprojection, thereby implying that it can be used as a reliable source of facts for historical reconstruction (Melchert, 'Transition', 53).
 133 See p.26, 28 above. See also p.203, n.69 below regarding an explicitly polemical segment included in Sulamī's biography of Junayd which is repeated in Qushayrī's *Risāla*.
 134 See p.28 above.
 135 TABS, 64.1.
 136 TABS, 66.5.
 137 e.g. see pp.166–7 below regarding Jāmī's attempt to link back his *Nafahāt* to Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*.

Chapter Two: The *Hilyat al-awliya'*

- 1 al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 18–22.
 2 al-Nabhānī, *Karāmāt*, I, 293.
 3 e.g. See TABS, 229.1–8 (the introduction of the biography of 'Alī b. Sahl al-Isfahānī).
 4 See H, I, 4.14–15.
 5 See H, X, 402–8.
 6 See the bibliography for details of the printed editions of these two works (*Geschichte Isbahans* and *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*). For the minor works ascribed to Abū Nu'aym, see Khoury, 'Importance', 78.
 7 H, I, 41.1.
 8 See H, I, 28–87; H, X, 402–408. The final person listed in the *Hilya* is Abū 'l-Hasan 'Alī b. Māshādha (d.414/1023), a pious Shafi'ite scholar from Isfahan. Although he is not explicitly linked to the group of successors of Ibn Ma'dān whose biographies immediately precede his own, the position of his biography implies that he was a product of their tradition. His deliberate

- inclusion at the end of the work (*wa-khatama 'l-tahqīq bi-tarīqat al-mutaṣawwifa bi-'Alī 'l-Hasan 'Alī b. Māshādha*) may have been due to his importance in Isfahan at the time the work was completed there. Little information is offered about him in other biographical writings. In fact, he is known almost exclusively for his association with Abū Nu'aym by virtue of the position of his biography in the *Hilya* (See Ibn al-'Imād (d.481/1089), *Shadharāt*, III, 201; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 181.4–10).
 9 e.g. See Frank, 'Ṭaṣawwuf is...', 74.
 10 e.g. The biography of Fadīm Abū Hāshim, 'before whom Sufyān al-Thawrī sat [as a student]' (*jalasa ilayh Sufyān al-Thawrī*), is found in the tenth volume, whilst that of Sufyān al-Thawrī overlaps the sixth and seventh volumes (see H, VI, 356–VII, 144; H, X, 112). See also pp.71–2 below concerning the Abū Hāshim biographical tradition.
 11 The aforementioned Fadīm Abū Hāshim's biography is juxtaposed to biographies of fellow Sufis from Baghdad.
 12 e.g. The biography of Abū Yazīd is followed by those of Aḥmad b. al-Khaḍrawayhi and Ibrāhīm al-Harawī. Ibn al-Khaḍrawayhi's biography begins with a narrative involving Abū Yazīd, whilst Harawī is introduced as a companion of Abū Yazīd (*min aqrān Abī Yazīd*) (See H, X, 42–43).
 13 e.g. The biographies of Abū Ya'qūb al-Zayyāt and Abū Ja'far al-Kūfī both contain the same anecdotal topos, concerning the handing over of 'dirhams' to or from Junayd (See H, X, 223.24–224.20). This topos is also used in the biography of Junayd itself, where he is described as handing over 'dirhams' to Sarī 'l-Saqāṭī (See H, X, 270.23–271.2).
 14 e.g. Two biographies devoted to Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (H, X, 45–51 & 219–22); two biographies devoted to Abū Aḥmad al-Qalānisi (H, X, 306 & 341); two biographies devoted to Abū Ya'qūb al-Zayyāt (H, X, 223 & 342–3) for an example of overlapping material, see H, X, 223.24–224.6 cf. 342.18–25).
 15 Raif Khoury, whilst pointing out the value of the *Hilya* as a work of historiography, has also noticed the problematic nature of its form: *Bref on y sent la main de plusieurs transmetteurs qui ont copié le texte plus d'une fois, dans ces séances d'étude et de transmission, comme c'était le cas dans les cercles des lettrés islamiques à travers les siècles* (Khoury, 'L'importance', 97). Despite these observations, Khoury continues to classify the *Hilya* as Abū Nu'aym's work. It remains worthwhile to avoid the attribution of the same kind of 'authorship' to works such as the *Hilya*, as, for example, its contemporary Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt*, even if organic school texts are hardly uncommon in medieval Islamic scholarship (e.g. see Calder, *Studies*, especially Ch.7).
 16 The remaining eight are each members of Sulamī's first generation, and their biographies are found in Volumes VII–IX. (Ibrāhīm b. Adham, Shaqīq al-Balkhī, Hātim al-Aṣamm, Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ, Bishr al-Hāfi, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, al-Dārānī and Aḥmad al-Anṭākī).
 17 See H, I, 3–5, where can be found the stated intention of the *Hilya*, to distinguish 'authentic' Sufism from the ways of false pretenders, with specific reference to the 'permissivists' (*mubāhiyya*) and the 'incarnationists' (*hulūliyya*).
 18 See al-Daylamī, *Sīra*, 98–99, where Hallāj's visit to Isfahan is described. See also Meier, *Ein Wichtiger*, 60–106.
 19 There are in total nine group introductions in the tenth volume (see H, X, 41; 222; 233; 305; 311; 375; 387; 407; 408).

- 20 See H, X, 41.24–42.2.
- 21 Group introductions are seldom provided in the remaining nine volumes. For examples, see H, II, 25 (*ahl al-suffa* 'mentioned by Sulamī and A'rābī'; see further pp.66–7 below), and 61 (*tābi'ūn*); VI, 148 (*nussāk, 'ubbād*).
- 22 See H, X, 222.22–25. Outside of the *Hilya*, Khazzāz is normally remembered by the alternative *nisba* Kharrāz. He is mentioned here as one of the gnostics from Iraq to whom books are ascribed (*minhum man yunsab ilayh al-kutub al-muṣannafa ka-Abī Sa'īd al-Khazzāz*).
- 23 See H, X, 246–249.18.
- 24 See H, X, 232.22. In the printed edition, it forms the first clause of the introduction to the biography of Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl.
- 25 See p.42; 63–4 below concerning the occurrence of repeated biographies, usually with overlapping material, and the existence of *isnāds* in which Abū Nu'aym himself is mentioned as a tradent.
- 26 See p.21 above.
- 27 This format is shared by the vast majority of the biographies in the *Hilya*, which makes it all the more conspicuous that the biography of Junayd possesses an anomalous resumption of its body after the *hadith* transmission. See pp.59–60 below.
- 28 Out of the 63 segments that make up the body of the biography of Abū Yazīd, 32 segments are introduced by means of an *isnād*, 8 segments by means of a phrase that re-introduces a narrator (*qāla wa-*), and 23 segments by means of a simple conjunction (*wa-/fa-*). Out of the 107 segments that make up the body of the biography of Junayd, 78 segments are introduced by an *isnād*, 9 segments by *qāla wa-*, and 20 segments by means of *wa-/fa-*. See also pp.21–4 above.
- 29 Nor indeed in the manuscript tradition, including the one on which the tenth volume of the printed edition is based (Azhariyya). Whilst the *isnāds* tend to be highlighted, the same often applies for the alternative types of introduction. I am indebted to Shaykh Ahmad Khalifa of the al-Azhar library for allowing me to view the Azhariyya manuscript briefly under his supervision.
- 30 The manuscript on which the printed edition is based reveals two misprints here. The text should read *jalastum* (not *ujlistum*) and *fa-lam* (not *fa-ma*).
- 31 The omission of *ghaybatī* after *kānat* is a misprint according to the Azhariyya manuscript itself. This can also be deduced from Segment 6, which is a variant.
- 32 The printed edition faithfully repeats the reading of the Azhariyya manuscript here. However, see note 35 below.
- 33 The manuscript on which the printed edition is based includes the clause *fa-qāla Abū Yazīd*, which is omitted in the printed text, immediately after what would then be read as a statement, *inna 'l-mā' al-qā'im qad kurīha 'l-undū' minh*. Thus the latter clause would represent the questioner's allegory, whilst Abū Yazīd's response would begin with *lam yaraw bi-mā' al-baḥr ba'san*.
- 34 I should like to thank Maroun Aouad, Michael Cook, Oleg Grabar and Andras Hamori for a number of helpful suggestions regarding the translation of this problematic passage, during the Arabic Texts Seminar at the Institute for Advanced Study in May 1999.
- 35 The Leiden manuscript gives instead *lah* 'to him'.

See also H, X, 35.18–19; 22–3, where two juxtaposed segments each begin with the same formula: *fa-jā'a rajul ilā Abī Yazīd fa-qāla*.

See p.58 below.

See H, X, 35.24–36.1, which is also presented below p.62.

See pp.45–7 above.

For examples of variant utterances in the biography of Junayd, see H, X, 263.18–20 cf. H, X, 267.20–22.

See the classification of segments in pp.24–6 above.

The five segments containing fragments of verse (attributed to Junayd) range in length from one to three distiches. Although it is possible to interpret them mystically, they consist mostly of love-poetry topoi, such as 'the lover's oppression' and 'the gossip of the people about the lovers' (e.g. see H, X, 269.3–7).

H, X, 282.5–25; 283.1–23; 284.22–287.17.

H, X, 283.7–8.

H, X, 283.2–3; 284.23–24.

H, X, 282.5–6.

H, X, 256.4–16; 257.20–259.16; 259.17–260.18; 260.19–261.21; 262.8–263.10; 264.4–265.1; 265.2–13; 265.19–266.25; 271.10–273.5; 276.4–277.5; 276.6–23; 278.16–22; 279.9–280.2; 280.11–25; 283.24–284.12.

See p.28 above, for a discussion of this epistle.

Most of the epistolary segments are introduced simply as something 'said' by Junayd (*sami'tu ... yaqūl*). Five of them are introduced as written correspondence composed by Junayd; four simply as something written 'to one of his [Sufi] brethren' (*kataba 'l-Junayd ilā ba'd ikhwānih/kataba ilā ba'd ikhwānih kitāban yaqūl fih*), whilst the remaining example is introduced as written correspondence and names the recipient as Abū Ishāq al-Māristānī; this epistle can be divided into two sections, the first section of which is also found in the biography of Māristānī itself, but as the final part of an entirely different epistle (see H, X, 276.4–277.5 cf. H, X, 333.4–12).

The five examples which are presented as written correspondence by Junayd are also included in a manuscript which is known as 'The *Rasā'il* of Junayd', along with other material similar in form, style and use of vocabulary (see Abdel-Kader, *Life, personality and writings*, Appendix, 1–62 (Arabic text). The editor and translator of this manuscript has classified these segments as 'letters', in accordance with the classification offered by their transmitters.

See H, X, 257.20–261.21.

See H, X, 255.15–17. See pp.52–3 below, regarding the narratives which describe encounters with Muḥāsibī.

See pp.61–3.

The *shābb* motif is commonly associated with wisdom and miraculous powers (e.g. see H, X, 275.5–17).

See p.63 below, where this narrative is presented.

In fact, both of them are also found in the biography of Muḥāsibī in the same volume of the *Hilya* (see H, X, 74.6–18). The variant of Segment 1 is offered with a further *isnād*, in addition to transmission from Ahmad b. Muḥammad, and the variant of Segment 2 is presented with its own *isnād*, identical to that of Segment 1.

- 56 e.g. See TABS, 340.9.
- 57 The manuscript in Leiden gives *ghayruk*, which would seem more appropriate. The similarity between the letters *kāf* and *yā'* in the manuscript may account for this discrepancy. An alternative explanation, although perhaps less likely, is that *ghayruk* may have been employed deliberately in order to avoid the attribution of a 'counter-boast' to Abū Yazīd.
- 58 See Fahndrich, 'The *Wafayāt al-a'yān*', 444. See also Noth/Conrad, *Early Arabic historiography*, 109–204.
- 59 The second *Allāh* is missing in the printed edition, but it is required both to make grammatical sense and to parallel Junayd's previous utterance.
- 60 See TABS, 253.9–254.1.
- 61 See L, 380–395.
- 62 See pp.18–19 above.
- 63 See H, X, 255.7–11.
- 64 See p.50 above.
- 65 In fact, it presents the very same hadith as its counterpart in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* (see H, X, 41.6–17, cf. TABS, 60.10–61.11).
- 66 See p.49 above.
- 67 e.g. H, X, 69.12–13; 109.22–25; 281.18–20; 296.11–12.
- 68 H, X, 281.22–282.4.
- 69 See pp.46–7 above.
- 70 See p.54 above.
- 71 See H, X, 282.5–287.17.
- 72 See H, X, 281.11–281.18.
- 73 Daube, *Studies*, 74–101.
- 74 H, X, 34.18–21.
- 75 See below for possible interpretations of *kitāb*.
- 76 H, X, 381.10–12. See also TABS, 454–5.
- 77 e.g. H, X, 257.11.
- 78 e.g. H, X, 279.2.
- 79 e.g. H, X, 257.20.
- 80 One of the segments introduced as part of written correspondence offers a date *akhbaranā Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr fi-mā kataba ilayya sanat thalāthīn wa-arba'in* (H, X, 381.15). This date is presumably [3]43, when Abū Nu'aym would have been only seven years old.
- 81 See p.54 above.
- 82 H, X, 35.24–36.1.
- 83 Modern scholars have sometimes referred to a 'lost book' by Khuldī, entitled *Hikāyāt al-awliyā'*, but this title, which is derived from medieval sources, probably represents no more than a generic reference to the segments collected by Khuldī, and not to a literary work (see Abdel-Kader, *Life, Personality and writings*, 12).
- 84 H, X, 381.10. The introduction also remarks that he followed the best of people, including Junayd *ṣaḥība 'l-akhbar al-Junayd wa-'l-Thaurī wa-Ruwayman*. The first segment after the introduction is a hadith.
- 85 TABS, 454.5–7.
- 86 See below, and H, X, 257.21. The latter example has been overlooked by the editor in his method of paragraphing clusters.
- 87 See Calder, *Studies*, 173.

- 88 See Ch.3 on the Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, a work which, according to tradition, was compiled by a student on the basis of records of 'the author's' teaching sessions.
- 89 The above narrative also suggests that teaching sessions may have been held in a specific place away from the home of the teacher. Muḥāsibī leaves the location of his teaching session (*al-makān allādhī yaḥlis fih*) to return home (*thumma yamūdi ilā manzilih*). See pp.29–32 above.
- 90 See H, VIII, 306.4; 336.25; 369.19 (in each case the *isnād* begins thus, *haddathanā 'l-shaykh al-ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh raḥimah Allāh*).
- 91 See H, IX, 279.20 (*akhbaranā 'l-shaykh Abū 'l-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥaddād qirā'atan 'alayh wa-anā asma' qāla akhbaranā Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh al-ḥāfiẓ qirā'atan 'alayh hādha 'l-hadīth bi-isnādih . . .*). See pp.87–8 above concerning the *qirā'a* mode of transmission.
- 92 Pedersen has directed attention to a number of further *isnāds*, but they include an 'Abū Nu'aym' mentioned at stages, where an individual from the second century would be required. See TABS, Editor's Intro., 67 and H, I, 72; 322; 328.
- 93 e.g. H, X, 34.6–10 cf. TABS, 64.14–65.3. However, consider H, X, 40.7–9, which cannot be found in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*.
- 94 e.g. H, X, 34.6; 40.1. There are also two *isnāds* that name Sulamī as the source by means of the formula, *akhbaranā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn qāla . . .* Whilst the use of *akhbaranā* in this work tends to imply written transmission, this is not made explicit here by, for instance, reference to a *kitāb*.
- 95 See TABS, 62.3–6 cf. H, X, 37.23–24; 39.13, and also H, X, 37.21–23 cf. TABS, 62.2–3; 64.7–8.
- 96 H, X, 232.21–24 cf. TABS, 206.1–8.
- 97 H, X, 233.13–19 cf. TABS, 206.10–207.7.
- 98 H, X, 232.25–233.12 cf. TABS, 207.9–208.6; 208.11–209.3; 209.13–210.1.
- 99 See Watt, 'ahl al-ṣuffa' in EI².
- 100 See H, II, 25.8–22.
- 101 The *Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk* is not extant. However, in contrast to the case of Ja'far Khuldī (see pp.61–2 above), written works are consistently ascribed to A'rābī in the Sufi biographical tradition itself (e.g. H, X, 375.15–16, *lah al-taṣānīf al-mashhūra*; TABS, 443.6 (*ṣannafa li-'l-qawm kutuban kathīra*)).

Chapter Three: The Persian *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*

- 1 This is made explicit by what appears to be an interpolation in the introduction of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, a work traditionally ascribed to Anṣārī. It is claimed there that his ancestor amongst the *anṣār* was none other than the one who accommodated the Prophet himself after his migration from Mecca, called Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī. It is also claimed here that Abū Ayyūb was one of 'the people of the canopy' (*aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa*), and that he died in Constantinople on a military expedition (see TABA, 1.9–2.4). In this way, Anṣārī is given impeccable religious credentials with regards to his descent. It is therefore surprising (perhaps an oversight) that this interpolation also states that his first ancestor to move to Herat was called Matt al-Anṣārī.

- 2 See Kramers, 'Shaykh al-Islām' in EI².
- 3 Ibn Abī Ya'la, *Tabaqāt*, II, 247–8 (no.684).
- 4 Ibid., 248.
- 5 al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-Islām*, Year 481, 53–63.
- 6 See Ibid., 59.1–18.
- 7 e.g. see p.41 above, concerning the biography of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī in the Shafī'ite tradition).
- 8 For more information on the biographical tradition of Anṣārī, see the pioneering work of De Beaurecueil, *Khawādja 'Abdullāh* (especially 15–149), and also that of his translator into Dari, Ravan Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari*, 3–15.
- 9 See Ritter, 'Philologika', 89–100, and Ravan Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari*, 19–23. Ritter's list (of fifteen works) omits *Dhamm al-Kalām*, a work which has been counted as Hanbalite and is included by both Ravan Farhadi, who has translated selected passages into English (pp.35–40), and Brockelmann (*Geschichte*, Supplementband I, 773–4). One should bear in mind Ravan Farhadi's introductory comment: '*Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herat is considered a 'great writer', and yet he almost never wrote!* (p.19). See further below, especially Section VI.
- 10 See Ivanow, 'Tabaqat of Ansari', 1–34; 337–382. This two-part article contains extensive notes about the peculiarities of the dialect. I would like to thank Leonard Lewisohn for lending me his copy.
- 11 The work is referred to here as 'the Persian *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*' to distinguish it from its earlier (Arabic) namesake. For the purposes of this study the edition prepared by Abd al-Hayy Habibi is used, in preference to the more recent edition by Mawlayi. Whilst, as Ravan Farhadi has pointed out (pp.43–44), Mawlayi's edition provides many helpful indices, its main text does not follow the oldest manuscript as closely. Moreover, it incorporates the use of 'end-chapter' notes, which are hardly appropriate for a work where such divisions are often blurred (e.g. see pp.79–85 below).
I have also had the opportunity to examine the oldest surviving manuscript (Nafiz Pasha 426 – photographed copy in Tehran University). I would like to thank Florian Sobieroj, Nasrollah Pourjavady and all the staff at the manuscript library of Tehran University for their assistance.
- 12 See Ch. 1, Section II above.
- 13 e.g. *al-Tabaqa al-thāniya min a'immat al-Sūfiyya* (The second generation of the leaders of the Sufis), located immediately before the second generation section (TABA, 112.10).
- 14 e.g. *wa-min al-tabaqa al-'ulā Bā Hafṣ Haddād Nishābūrī* (TABA, 90.12–13).
- 15 There is no corresponding biography in the Persian *Tabaqāt* for the following which are provided by Sulamī: the biography of 'Abdullāh b. Khubayq b. Sābiq al-Anṭākī (TABS, 131–135), the combined biographies of Muḥammad and Aḥmad the sons of Abī 'l-Ward (TABS, 246–250).
- 16 For the exceptions, see TABA, 123–126 (cf. TABS, 328–331), the biography of Abū Ḥamza 'l-Khurasānī; TABA, 126–131 (cf. TABS, 294–7), the biography of Abū Ḥamza 'l-Baghdādī. There are also four instances where a biography is classified as a member of a particular generation section in Sulamī's work, whilst here their classification is left ambiguous (see TABA, 209 (cf. TABS, 318) concerning Mamshād al-Dīnawarī; TABA, 270 (cf.

- TABS, 271) concerning Tāhir al-Maqdisī; TABA, 341 (cf. TABS, 321) concerning Ibrāhīm al-Raqqī; TABA, 367 (cf. TABS, 386) concerning Abū Bakr al-Kattānī.
- 17 See pp.10–18 above.
- 18 See TABA, 112–118.
- 19 See TABA, 161–169.
- 20 Nonetheless, this discrepancy suggests a promotion of Tustarī from his mediocre position in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*.
- 21 See p.11 above.
- 22 TABA, 7.3–4.
- 23 TABA, 9.14–10.11. The *Hilya* includes in its tenth volume the biographies of 'Abū Hāshim Fadīm' and 'Abū Hāshim al-Zāhid', which both contain variants of the same anecdotes: see H, X, 112.9–11 cf. H, X, 225.16–19 cf. TABA, 9.7–8; H, X, 225.19–20 cf. TABA, 9.9–10. An English translation of the biography of Abū Hāshim is provided in Ravan Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari*, 47–9.
- 24 See TABA, 300.5–301.9 (the biography of Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Dīnawarī) and 302.5–304.10 (the biography of Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Sayyārī).
- 25 See TABA, 279.8. This relationship is also mentioned in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*, so that its mention here is unlikely to have been merely generated by the juxtaposition of their biographies.
- 26 TABA, 200.3–4.
- 27 See further pp.75–8 below, concerning the juxtaposition of the 'building-block' segments of biographies on account of association between their contents.
- 28 See TABA, 244.11–13.
- 29 See TABA, 352.11–353.2.
- 30 e.g. see pp.166–7 below.
- 31 See p.91 below.
- 32 See pp.75–8 below.
- 33 See TABA, 37.7–70.1. See Section V below concerning the provision of introductions as demarcators of biographies. The first introduction to Ibn Shakhraf is not followed by the body of a biography about him. Rather, it appears to have been provided because of an anecdote relating an encounter between Ibn Shakhraf and Isrāfīl, the subject of the immediately preceding biography. The second introduction is followed by the body of an actual biography.
- 34 See pp.79–85 below.
- 35 An interesting example is the clumsy repetition of the same hadith in the introduction of the work, the multi-layered structure of which shows indications of being the product of 'many hands' (see TABA, 3.11; 5.11–12).
- 36 Passages that are given in Arabic in the text (as opposed to the predominant Persian) are presented in bold type in the translation.
- 37 TABA, 90.6–9.
- 38 In the oldest manuscript it reads, *guftand rāst mīgūyad az way bāz shawīd*. The problem is that two parties, in addition to the old beggar-woman, are referred to: the speaker (active or implied passively) and those to whom the command *bāz shawīd* is directed (see TABA, 586.1–3). In the preceding part of the segment the only speakers mentioned are the beggar-woman and the subject of the previous *guftand* who ask(s) her what she has brought. This final

sentence is probably a clumsy gloss that functions to defend the beggar-woman's ironic lament, even though that may have been originally the ironic punchline of a joke. It would perhaps have been more appropriate as a gloss with the same function for the preceding variant, which contains Abū Yazīd's bold retort (to the same question asked of the beggar-woman), 'When a poor man reaches the court of a king he is asked what he wants not what he has brought!' One might speculate that the gloss was perhaps intended to influence (reassuringly) the reception of this segment about the subject of the biography.

- 39 TABA, 285.3–5.
- 40 e.g. TABA, 90.2–4.
- 41 e.g. TABA, 90.6.
- 42 e.g. TABA, 90.9–10 cf. TABS, 64.1; TABA, 88.9–11 cf. H, X, 40.2–6.
- 43 TABA, 90.6–9.
- 44 TABA, 94.6–13.
- 45 TABA, 90.9–10 cf. TABS, 63.13–64.1; 66.5.
- 46 See TABA, 88.9–12 cf. H, X, 40.2–6; TABA, 93.16–94.1 cf. H, X, 38.17–18.
- 47 TABA, 95.4–5 cf. TABS, 66.6–8.
- 48 See pp.46–7; 49 above concerning the attribution of a variant utterance to Dhū 'l-Nūn in the biography of Abū Yazīd in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*.
- 49 The heading *Mas'ala fi 'l-tawhīd* is found at TABA, 169.6.
- 50 The biography of Ibn al-Karabī begins at TABA, 184.9.
- 51 See pp.50–51 above.
- 52 See TABA, 167.6–7.
- 53 There is considerable discrepancy between manuscript variants of this introduction. It suggests that the copyists themselves found it problematic. The difficulties are probably due to one or more layers of interpolation (see TABA, 170, notes 4–5).
- 54 TABA, 136.12–149.10.
- 55 TABA, 136.3–4.
- 56 TABA, 149.12. The biography of Kharrāz continues until p.154.9.
- 57 TABA, 20.2–25.9. See also the translation into French prepared by De Beaurecueil in his *Khawādjā 'Abdullāh*, 258–264.
- 58 See TABA, 168.9–13 (cf. H, X, 268.21–23) for the other variants.
- 59 In the Persian *Tabaqāt* Surūshān was his great-grandfather, rather than his grandfather. This is perhaps part of a process of distancing him in time from his Magian ancestor. The name offered for Abū Yazīd's grandfather is *Ādam*, the name of one of his brothers according to Sulamī. It may be more than a coincidence, since there is little doubt that the earlier version has been used as a source.
- 60 See p.18 above.
- 61 See p.57 above.
- 62 A conspicuous gloss is the comment informing that Abū Thawr was Shāfi'ī's best student. It may be that later readers were less familiar with his identity, and that a need was felt to highlight his traditionalist credentials.
- 63 See Ch.1 note 57.
- 64 The exception is introduced as being found in a work called *Ta'rikh al-Sūfiyya* ascribed to Sulamī (see Ch.1 note 14 above). It is not found in his *Tabaqāt* – it

is about a Sufi belonging to the sixth generation section, namely Abū 'l-Hasan Sīrwanī (see TABA, 482.11).

- 65 TABA, 447.1–4 cf. TABS, 516.4–7; TABA, 477.3–6 cf. TABS, 541.11–542.4.
- 66 With regard to memorization and notebooks, see Makdisi, *Colleges*, 99–105.
- 67 See the manuscript variants: TABA, 321, notes 2 and 3.
- 68 This is probably a gloss with the aim of boosting the authority on which the segment is given.
- 69 See pp.31–2; 63–4 above concerning *qirā'a* and *ijāza*; Makdisi, *Colleges*, 104–5.
- 70 See Calder, *Studies*, 176.
- 71 See *ibid.*, 171–181.
- 72 See pp.64–5 above.
- 73 See note 33 above for another example of an (apparently) repeated biography.
- 74 The parts in bold are originally in Arabic.
- 75 See pp.82–3 above.
- 76 This biography is found amongst the group of ten juxtaposed biographies about individuals with the *kunya* Abū 'l-'Abbās (TABA, 311.4–312.7).
- 77 See also TABA, 163, notes 11 & 12 for the editor's discussion of the variants in extant manuscripts which suggest that *kard* should be understood as *kardam*.
- 78 e.g. an utterance attributed to Abū Yazīd, TABA, 561.14–562.3.
- 79 See TABA, 543, note 1.

Chapter Four: Qushayrī's *Risāla*

- 1 al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, XI, 83.13–14.
- 2 Sulamī is introduced in the *Ta'rikh Baghdād* in similar terms, but it also indicates that he was a Sufi (see p.9 above).
- 3 KM, 209.10–210.6. In fact, many (Sufi) utterances attributed to Qushayrī are also included in other parts of this work (see KM, 28; 141; 189; 205; 287; 401; 439).
- 4 al-Fārisī, *al-Siyāq*, BII, ff.49a–51a. This purports to be a continuation of the 'lost' *Ta'rikh Naysābūr* ascribed to 'Abdullāh b. al-Bayyī' al-Ḥakīm al-Naysābūrī (d.405/1014).
- 5 Ustuwwa is thought to have been located about 150km North of Nishapur (near Quchan in North Eastern Iran), before the 13th century Mongol invasions. See Gramlich, *Das Sendschreiben*, Einleitung, 11.
- 6 Regarding the connotations of transmission by *samā'*, see Calder, *Studies*, 171–6.
- 7 According to 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Alī b. al-Jawzī (d.597/1192), Qushayrī died in the month of Rajab and was buried next to his teacher Abū 'Alī 'l-Daqqāq (Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam*, VIII, 280). Ibn Khallikān (d.681/1282) reports that he died on Sunday 16th Rabī' al-Ākhir and was buried beneath Daqqāq (Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 205–7). Subkī relates a tradition that Qushayrī died in the early morning of Sunday 16th Rabī' al-Ākhir after an illness, during which he continued to stand up for prayer; he was then buried next to his teacher Daqqāq (al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, V, 159.16–18). These versions serve to emphasise the relationship between Qushayrī and Daqqāq, as well as the piety and humility of the former (see p.55, 86 above).
- 8 See Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, I, 556–7.

- 9 The *Risāla* is available in several manuscripts and has been translated into Persian, (Ottoman and Modern) Turkish and Urdu. A number of commentaries to the *Risāla* have also been produced from the thirteenth until the nineteenth century (see Von Schlegell, *Principles*, xii–xvii (preface by Hamid Algar). It is used today as a standard textbook in al-Azhar.
- 10 There are two main editions of *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*. This study is based on the single volume Tehran reprint of the edition prepared by 'Abd al-Halīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd al-Sharīf (originally as a two-volume work – hence discrepancies in reference details, though not in the actual text itself). Manuscript variants provided in Gramlich's indispensable German edition have also been taken into consideration. For further details of these editions, see the Bibliography.
- 11 Gerhard Böwering, who also recognises the dual-generic nature of the *Risāla*, refers to it as a 'manual', in order to distinguish it from works such as Sarraḥ's *Kitāb al-Luma'*, which he classifies as a 'treatise' (see Böwering, *Mystical vision of existence*, 19–21). Whilst his appreciation of the significance of this distinction is laudable, his choice of terms is unhelpful. In view of the fact that the works which Böwering labels 'treatises' are conventionally classified as 'manuals', I have decided to conform to the latter convention rather than adopt Böwering's terminology; I therefore distinguish the *Risāla* (as well as Hujwiri's *Kashf al-mahjūb*) as a 'dual-generic' work, thereby highlighting the actual reason for its distinction.
- 12 See below concerning the final chapter of the work, which can be regarded as an appendix.
- 13 In fact, Gramlich classifies this section as a continuation of the introduction of the *Risāla*.
- 14 R, 19–33. See also R, 31.18–19, where Qushayrī concludes that the segments (*hikāyāt*) which he has presented show that 'the doctrines (*'aḡā'id*) of the Sufis are in accordance with the sayings of 'the followers of the truth' (evidently in this context this title is being applied to the Ash'arites).
- 15 R, 121.12–13.
- 16 R, 121.1–11.
- 17 Thirteen chapters in this section consider Sufi terms in pairs (e.g. R, 126–9, *qabḍ / basṭ*); ten chapters consider them individually (e.g. R, 121–3, *al-ṣuqr*). Four of them consider terms in groups of three (e.g. R, 162, *'ilm al-yaqīn / 'ayn al-yaqīn / haqq al-yaqīn*).
- 18 Qushayrī uses the term *hāb* here to mean 'chapter', although it is used for 'section' in previous contexts (*tabaqāt* and terminology sections). It is presumably out of a desire to translate this term consistently that Richard Gramlich has divided his German edition of the *Risāla* into a total of 54 'Kapitel', 52 of which are accounted for by the systematic section and the appendix (according to my classification), whilst the *tabaqāt* and terminology sections make up only one Kapitel each. I have preferred an alternative classification, despite the fact that it necessitates alternating translations of the term *hāb*, in order to give a more representative overview of the work (the systematic section does not account for almost the entire *Risāla*, as the 52:54 ratio would imply).
- 19 The different types of material are usually presented in this order when included. Prophetic hadith are occasionally found later in a chapter as well (e.g. R, 223.22–224.3). Citations from the Qur'an can also be found later in

- a chapter, when they are accompanied by commentary (e.g. R, 212.19–213.2). The most frequently quoted Sufi authorities in this section are Abū 'Alī 'l-Daqqāq and Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junayd.
- 20 See R, 539–554. Margaret Malamud has also referred to this final chapter as being distinct from the remainder of the work (see Malamud, 'Sufi organisations', 429). See also Hartmann, *Darstellung*, 175–207.
- 21 R, 15.8–9.
- 22 R, 554.7.
- 23 See Ch.1, Section II above.
- 24 R, 35–70 cf. TABS, 7–141.
- 25 e.g. R, 107–117 (15 biographies) cf. TABS, 443–552. The biography of Sahl al-Tustarī (R, 57–8) stands out as the only major discrepancy. It is the eleventh biography in the biographical section of the *Risāla*, placing it amongst those corresponding to the first generation of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt*, whilst it is actually found in the second generation of that work (TABS, 199–205). This makes it the only biography in Qushayrī's *tabaqāt* section to be positioned in a portion of the series of biographies which does not correspond to the generation in which it had been classified by Sulamī.
- This biography is made up largely of a narrative describing his uncle's practical instruction to him about the performance of *dhikr* (remembrance of God). The final segment of the immediately preceding biography, that of Abū Yazīd, is a narrative which also refers to the performance of *dhikr* (R, 56.19–22). The thematic link between these narratives is perhaps a reason for the exact position of Tustarī's biography in the *Risāla*; they may have become juxtaposed in the processes of transmission and compilation, and eventually influenced the exact position of their respective biographies. Nonetheless, it is surely no coincidence that Tustarī's biography should once again be relocated, just as in the Persian *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya*, the organisational framework of which is also influenced by Sulamī's arrangement to a significant degree.
- 26 Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī is named as the Sufi authority with whom Ma'rūf al-Karkhī associated (TABS, 74.12–75.1). Al-Zaqqāq al-Kabīr is mentioned three times: he is one of the Sufi authorities with whom Abū Bakr al-Duqqī is said to have associated, and similarly one with whom 'Alī b. Bundār al-Ṣayrafī associated; he is also mentioned in an *isnād* as the transmitter of an anecdote about Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (TABS, 469; 534.2; 225.4–10). Abū 'Ubayd al-Busrī is mentioned four times: Abū 'Abdullāh al-Jallā', Shāh al-Kirmānī and Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz are each said to have associated with him; he is also mentioned positively in an anecdote about Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (TABS, 166.4–6; 183.4–5; 223.3–4; 136.7–11).
- 27 R, 79.11, 15; 82.3, 7. In fact, the biographies of Zaqqāq and Busrī contain only two *isnāds* in total, both of which name Sulamī as the immediate source.
- 28 R, 82.17. Similarly, the biography of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī which is positioned tenth in Sulamī's first generation is the fourth biography of Qushayrī's series, immediately before that of Sarī 'l-Saqatī who is said to have been his student (R, 41.5; 43.10).
- 29 See TABS, 242–252; 332–339; 427–442; 533–553.
- 30 e.g. R, 217.9–14. See also p.184, n.12 above (referring to R, 348.3–20).
- 31 See TABS, 4–5 and Ch. 1, Section II above.

- 32 TABS, 5.7–10.
 33 See Gramlich, *Das Sendschreiben*, 105, regarding manuscript variants.
 34 TABS, 60.1–10.
 35 TABS, 141.2–142.2.
 36 Qushayrī omits the names of sources, an alternative precise dating of Junayd's death, the name of his grandfather, and his own professional title, *al-Khazzāz* (the silk trader).
 37 R, 55.6–9; 55.10–13; 55.15–20; 56.1–9; 56.15–18.
 38 R, 55.21–4.
 39 R, 56.19–22. The first two transmitters mentioned are 'Isā 'l-Bastāmī, Abū Yazīd's brother, and his son Mūsā b. 'Isā ('Ammī 'l-Bastāmī).
 40 R, 56.10–12; 56.13–14.
 41 See TABS, 66.8–10; 63.2–5.
 42 See TABS, 62.9–10 for the *isnād* of Sulamī's version of the second segment.
 43 See R, 55.6–13.
 44 This segment is presented above, pp.25–6.
 45 R, 55.14.
 46 The biography of Junayd corroborates this interpretation, since it similarly begins with (six) segments that are also found in Sulamī's work, whilst no further segments from the same source are included at a later point (see below).
 47 R, 55.15–24 cf L, 103.14–104.6.
 48 This is indicated by the formula *wa-bi-hādhā 'l-isnād* before the second of the pair of segments. In Sarrāj's *Luma'* it is indicated by the repetition of the *isnād*. The *isnād* in the *Risāla* differs only by the addition of Sarrāj and the immediate source, Sijistānī, at the end of the chain.
 49 See Arberry, *Sufism*, 74; Hartmann, *Al-Kuschairis Darstellung*, 2–4.
 50 R, 56.13–18 cf. H, X, 40.15–19.
 51 While the two questions posed in the variant of the *Risāla* are not logically connected, they both share the construct *mā ashadd/ahwān mā* ... Similarly, the segment immediately preceding the variant in the *Hilya* contains the following pithy utterance about the carnal soul, which includes the use of *ahwān* and *aṣ'ab* (a synonym of *ashadd*): 'I treated everything but I did not treat anything more difficult (*aṣ'ab*) than the disease of my carnal soul (*nafs*), although there is nothing more worthless (*ahwān*) to me than that' (H, X, 36.18–20). It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that this may be more than a coincidence, and that Qushayrī's variant was derived from the combination of these two juxtaposed segments in the *Hilya*, which would then indicate that the text of the *Hilya* was the (direct) source for the *Risāla*.
 52 R, 56.19–22. The variant in the *Hilya* (H, X, 35.3–5) is presented above in translation, pp.44–6.
 53 R, 55.1–9. The 'voice' tells Abū Yazīd at first, 'You are not capable of being with us' (*yā Abā Yazīd lā taqwā ma'anā*), but then reassures him with, 'You've found [it]!' (*wajadta*).
 54 R, 71.4–6; 71.7–10; 71.11–20; 72.1–4; 72.7–8; 72.10–16.
 55 R, 72.17–19; 73.2–4; 73.5–7.
 56 R, 71.21; 71.22–3; 72.5–6; 72.9.
 57 The texts of the first and sixth segments are identical to those of the corresponding segments in the earlier work, whilst their *isnāds* differ only due

to the addition of Sulamī (Muḥammad b. al-Husayn) as the immediate source (R, 72.1–4, 72.4–6 cf. TABS, 143.9–11, 148.5–7).

The second and third segments similarly are given on the authority of *isnāds* which differ from those of their earlier variants only by the inclusion of Sulamī, as the immediate source, whilst the texts of both of these segments are abbreviated versions of their variants in Sulamī's work (R, 71.7–10, 71.11–20 cf. TABS, 143.14–144.2, 145.5–6; see also Gramlich, *Das Sendschreiben*, 66 for significant manuscript variants of the *isnād*).

The fourth and fifth segments, are also abbreviated variants of two juxtaposed segments in Sulamī's work. However, they are not provided here with any *isnāds*, whilst in the *Tabaqāt* the variant of the fourth segment is provided with one.

58 al-Rūdhbārī (d.320/934) is remembered as one of Junayd's followers. See R, 99.3.

59 Despite mentioning Sulamī in its *isnād* as the immediate source, this segment is not found in his work, nor in any of the earlier biographies of Junayd.

60 See pp.82–3; 95 above.

61 See R, 72.10–16.

62 R, 72.17–19.

63 R, 72.19–73.1.

64 R, 73.2–4 cf. H, X, 264.1–3.

65 TABA, 162.13–15.

66 See p.55 above concerning the two competing accounts of Junayd's death, which have both been included in the *Hilya*.

67 See above.

68 See L, 380–390, and Ernst, *Words of ecstasy*.

69 See especially R, 71.11–20, a polemical attack on the doctrine of *tark al-harakāt* (abandonment of pious deeds after attaining proximity to God).

70 R, 466–484.

71 R, 485–525.

72 See p.121 below concerning the omission of Hallāj from the *tafaqāt* section, despite the provision of segments about him in the systematic section.

73 See pp.112–13 above.

74 The final comment is a reference to the Muslim funeral prayer which begins with four repetitions of *Allāhu akbar*.

75 See pp.112–13 above.

76 One might suggest that the variant provided here has been generated by the combination of the 'severance of the girdle' motif and the autobiographical narrative form, which is relatively frequent in the biographical tradition of Abū Yazīd (and especially associated with spiritual progression).

77 See Ch. 2, Section IV above.

78 R, 477.21–478.5 cf. L, 282.9–14; 285.12–18.

79 This can be observed by noting Gramlich's references to parallel passages in the *Luma'* (Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, 461–79).

80 Although the term *murād* can have various uses, this particular segment is preceded by the following definition: *al-murād huwa 'l-mubtadi' wa- 'l-murād huwa 'l-muntahī* (R, 310.1).

81 The second segment parallels a segment included in the *Hilya*, in which Abū Yazīd is sent a prayer-rug with a written request that he pray on it at night, to

- which he replies that he has already collected all acts of worship ('ibādāt), 'put them in a pillow, and placed it under his cheek (i.e. to sleep)! (fa-ja'altuhā fi mikhadda wa-waḍa'tuhā tahta khaddī'. See H, X, 35.22–36.1.
- 82 See Gramlich, *Das Sendschreiben*, 608. These include a variant of a segment in Sulamī's biography of al-Hallāj, R, 441.3–4 cf. TABS, 309.6–8.
- 83 See R, 16.6–17.13.
- 84 See Section II above.

Chapter Five: Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb*

- 1 Jullāb and Hujwīr are neighbouring suburbs of Ghazna.
- 2 In the *Kashf al-mahjūb* Hujwīrī refers to at least nine further works of his own, none of which have survived (see Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-Mahjūb*, xi–xii).
- 3 e.g. KM, 314.13.
- 4 e.g. KM, 6.18.
- 5 e.g. KM, 6.18; 86.5.
- 6 e.g. KM, 337.10–12.
- 7 KM, 112–7 cf. 143–5; 145–6.
- 8 KM, 208.4.
- 9 See Ethé, *Catalogue*, I, 969 (No. 1773). Reynold Nicholson has observed the discrepancy between these dates and those given for the deaths of individuals whom Hujwīrī appears to have outlived according to the text of the *Kashf al-mahjūb*. He suggests a revised estimate between 465/1072–3 and 469/1076–7 (See Hujwīrī, *The Kashf*, x–xi).
- 10 See KM, 7.6.
- 11 It is extant in several manuscripts, the earliest of which is thought to have been written in the early ninth/fifteenth century (see Hujwīrī, *The Kashf*, 53).
- 12 Hujwīrī, *The Kashf*, x.
- 13 e.g. See pp.128–9 below, concerning the chapter on *ṣamā'*. Furthermore, although specific sources are seldom acknowledged, at one point Hujwīrī describes accurately the arrangement of biographies in Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* and Qushayrī's *Risāla* (see KM, 141.4–8).
- 14 Poverty is discussed in Chapter Two, whilst Chapter Three is largely taken up with a discussion of purity (see KM, 34.18–40.6).
- 15 Chapter Five stands apart from the others in this first Section of the work because it is concerned with the specific debate about the relative significance of two different aspects of Sufism (poverty and purity). Furthermore it fails to follow the same structural pattern as the other chapters of Section One, and it is also more than three times shorter than each of them.
- 16 Taken at face value, these opinions may appear to be incoherent and contradictory, suggesting that Hujwīrī is a confused and indecisive author. For example, see Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, 63–4, where he suggests that Hujwīrī 'is unable to provide a coherent verdict on whether poverty should be preferred to wealth'. The discussion which he refers to is parallel to Hujwīrī's discussion about intoxication (*sukr*) and sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) (see pp.142–6 below); similarly Hujwīrī declares a preference for poverty (*faqr*) as an attribute applicable to a Sufi and justifies this viewpoint, but, at the end of

- the discussion, he makes an allowance for those who prefer wealth (*ghanā'*). By this technique, he manages to accommodate seemingly contradictory opinions (see KM, 24.4–28.11). See further Mojaddedi, 'Extending the boundaries'.
- 17 Hujwīrī also appears to be particularly interested in the customs relating to wearing cloaks. He refers to a separate work, *Asrār al-khiraq wa-'l-mulawwanāt* (The secrets of patched and multi-coloured cloaks), which he claims to have also written about this topic (See KM, 63.9).
- 18 Chapter Four, on *ṭahāra*, is about the purification required as preparation for the performance of the four main Muslim rituals.
- 19 Chapters Nine to Eleven account for 175 pages (pp.432–607), whilst the first eight chapters make up only 91 pages (pp.341–432).
- 20 KM, 508–546 cf. L, 267–300.
- 21 KM, 541.17–542.13.
- 22 KM, 542.13–18.
- 23 KM, 542.18–544.15.
- 24 The biography of Ali, the first Imam, is included in the preceding chapter on the 'rightly-guided Caliphs'.
- 25 See pp.103–7 above.
- 26 However, there are corresponding biographies for only eighteen of the twenty-one biographies in that work's second generation.
- 27 Two of these biographies (Khayr al-Nassāj and Abū Hamza 'l-Khurāsānī) have actually been included amongst biographies corresponding to the second generation: KM, 182–185 cf. TABS, 324–331. They are also juxtaposed in the same order in both works.
- 28 KM, 195–7.
- 29 KM, 135–137.
- 30 KM, 143–145.
- 31 KM, 145–6.
- 32 KM, 189–193.
- 33 TABS, 308.6–10.
- 34 The individuals mentioned are Abū 'l-'Abbās b. 'Aṭā', Muḥammad b. Khafīf and Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Naṣrābādī.
- 35 Hujwīrī's list of those who accept Hallāj includes the names of the three mentioned by Sulamī in addition to 'Amr b. 'Uthmān (al-Makkī), Abū Ya'qūb al-Nahrajūrī and 'Alī b. Sahl al-Iṣfahānī (see further p? above). Hujwīrī also adds that the recent Sufis accept him (*wa jumla-yi muta'akhhirān qabūl kardand-ish*) (KM, 189.11–15).
- 36 KM, 189.15–16.
- 37 KM, 189.16–20.
- 38 KM, 189.17–20.
- 39 For example, Hujwīrī accepts criticism of Hallāj's behaviour, giving by way of example his departure from the company of teachers without permission, but he argues that his faith remained sound throughout.
- 40 KM, 192.8–10.
- 41 The utterance is presented at first in Arabic as, 'The tongues are seeking to speak, under their speech they are seeking to perish (*al-alsina mustanṭiqāt tahta nuṭqihā mustahlikāt*)'. It is followed by a Persian translation, which conveys, 'Talkative tongues are the destruction of silent hearts (*zabānhā-yi gūyā halāk-i*

- dilhā-yi khāmūsh-ast*)' (KM, 193.2). This utterance may be interpreted as relating directly to the reason given in the later Sufi tradition for Hallāj's execution.
- 42 See further Mojaddedi, 'Extending the boundaries'.
- 43 KM, 202–214.
- 44 See p.125 above.
- 45 KM, 190.5–6.
- 46 KM, 218–314.
- 47 In fact, the ten groups are listed previously in the introduction of the biography of Abū 'l-Hasan al-Nūrī, after whom one of these groups, the *Nūriyya*, is named (See KM, 164.7–17; 236–244).
- 48 See pp.143–6 below.
- 49 See pp.143–4 below for further details.
- 50 See KM, 333–341.
- 51 See p.133 above.
- 52 See further pp.143–6 below concerning *al-Tayfūriyya* and *al-Junaydiyya*.
- 53 See pp.18–19 above.
- 54 For instance, whilst in the *Ṭabaqāt* it is stated that Junayd practised jurisprudence according to the principles of Abū Thawr (*tafaqqaha 'alā Abī Thawr*), here in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* it is stated that he was [no less than] 'the leader' of the latter's companions (*imām-i aṣḥāb-i Abū Thawr*), thus elevating his status in this context even further. Moreover, Junayd is introduced in the *Kashf al-mahjūb* as a 'mufti' (implying someone with authoritative opinion) in the disciplines with which he is associated. This relatively uncommon usage is probably derived from the report in the *Ṭabaqāt*'s corresponding introduction, which describes him as giving fatwas (*kāna yufī*) in the circle of Abū Thawr (see pp.18–19 above).
- 55 See pp.137–8 below.
- 56 This is a reference to the ten accepted Sufi groups, each of whom is linked back to a Sufi leader. The *Tayfūriyya* are associated with Abū Yazīd (see below).
- 57 See p.18 above.
- 58 See p.136 above.
- 59 See pp.50–52 above.
- 60 KM, 161.15–162.14.
- 61 KM, 162.13–14.
- 62 See pp.26–7 above.
- 63 KM, 162.14–163.1 cf. TABS, 147.6–10.
- 64 See KM, 303.8–307.4. The two groups of heretics are both referred to as anthropomorphists (*gīrūhī az ḥashwīyān ki mujassima-yi ahl-i Khurāsān-and ... gīrūhī dīgar az mushabbihā*).
- 65 KM, 163.1–14.
- 66 See pp.160–162 below, concerning a similar narrative in Jāmī's *Nafahāt*, which even incorporates the hadith about *firāsa*.
- 67 See p.26 above.
- 68 KM, 132.19–133.12.
- 69 KM, 133.12–13 cf. TABS, 63.6–7. Although the conjunction *wa* is ambiguous, being translatable as 'while', as well as 'and', Hujwīrī's commentary shows that he prefers the latter possibility.

- 70 KM, 133.15–17.
- 71 KM, 133.15–16.
- 72 KM, 133.18–19.
- 73 See p.133 above.
- 74 KM, 230.4–5.
- 75 H, X, 40.10–14. See p.54 above.
- 76 Intoxication (*sukr*) is mentioned only in one other instance in the earlier biographies of Abū Yazīd, namely in the introduction of the hadith transmission of Abū Yazīd's biography in the *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, where it is suggested that his deep utterances were produced and issued from his intoxication (*nāfathāt sirrih al-mutawallada 'l-muntashara min sukrih*) (H, X, 41.8).
- 77 See KM, 230.4–9.
- 78 This is confirmed by the text, since virtually every chapter related to Sufi conduct contains a few utterances attributed to him.

Chapter Six: Jāmī's *Nafahāt al-uns*

- 1 See N, Editor's Introduction, 7.
- 2 The Naqshbandi Sufi leaders are referred to traditionally using the title *khwāja*, meaning 'master', and are also referred to collectively as the *Khawājagān*, especially before the time of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband (e.g. see N, 410.7–9).
- 3 See the biographies of Kāshgharī and Ahrār in Jāmī's *Nafahāt*, 408.5–410.7; 410.8–416.14. Jāmī, writing after Kāshgharī's death, does not actually mention that he was his disciple. Ahrār's biography is three times the length of the biography of Kāshgharī, and its position suggests that he is considered the contemporary representative of the Naqshbandi tradition. This is even declared unambiguously at the beginning of his biography.
- 4 See N, Editor's Intro., 12–20.
- 5 See Jāmī, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*.
- 6 This work has been translated into English by E.H. Whinfield and M.M. Kazvīnī (see bibliography).
- 7 See N, 1–2.21. For more information on Nawā'ī, see Barthold, *Herat*, and N, Editor's Intro., 11–14; 49; 53. Jāmī explains his choice of title, by remarking that, '[the work] which, by virtue of containing wafts (*nafahāt*) of the sweet breaths of the shaykhs, which have arrived from paradise and have blown onto the smelling faculty of the souls of those yearning for instances of presence in intimacy (*uns*) [with God], will be called 'The breaths of intimacy from the occasions of presence in paradise' (N, 2.24–25).
- 8 For details, refer to N, Editors Intro., 47–50.
- 9 This manuscript (Morad Mulla Library, no. 2349) shows indications that it had been checked and corrected, perhaps even by Jāmī himself.
- 10 The introduction contains sections on *wilāya* (sainthood), *ma'rifa* (gnosis), types of mystics (e.g. *ṣūfī*, *malāmatī*, *qalandar*), *tawhīd* (divine unity) and types of miracles (*karāmat*, *mu'jiza*) (see N, 1–25).
- 11 The main text of the oldest manuscript contains 585 biographies. There is considerable variation between manuscripts with a tendency for the number of biographies included to increase with time.

- 12 Although there are thirty-four biographies of Sufi women, they amount to a total of only twenty pages in the printed edition. The longest of these biographies (approx. 100 lines in the printed edition) is devoted to 'Tuhfa', who is associated with Sarī 'l-Saqāṭī (N, 623.6–626.3). However, most of the biographies consist of only one brief narrative, and many of these are variants of each other (e.g. see N, 630.21–631.9). Far from providing a significant resource on the contribution of women to Sufism, this appendix reveals Jāmī stretching his limited resources, as if under pressure to include the biographies of women.
- 13 N, 27–299. The introduction of the Persian *Tabaqāt* also forms the basis for the final section of the introduction of the *Nafahāt* (see N, 23–25 cf. TABA, 1–6).
- 14 For example, see pp.155–66 below, concerning the biographies of Abū Yazīd and Junayd.
- 15 N, 33.8–15.
- 16 See pp.72–3 above.
- 17 See TABA, 362–372; 390–397; 429–436; 486–492.
- 18 See N, 179–204.
- 19 See N, 23.6–13. See further pp.104–5 above.
- 20 e.g. The biography of Abū 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍramī has been inserted after that of Abū 'Abdullāh 'Abbādānī (see N, 121).
- 21 e.g. The biography of Ibrāhīm al-Ṣayyād al-Baghdādī has been inserted after that of Ibrāhīm Utrūsh (see N, 43).
- 22 e.g. The biography of Muḥammad Khālīd al-Ājurī has been inserted after that of Ibrāhīm Ājurī Kabīr (see N, 43).
- 23 Eighteen of them follow the biography of Ibn Khafīf al-Shīrāzī (see N, 242–259).
- 24 e.g. The biography of Aḥnaf al-Hamadānī consists of a single narrative in which the subject is described as appealing and receiving God's help, whilst travelling alone through a desert. The final segment of the immediately preceding biography, which is devoted to Abū Sa'īd Kharrāz, is a narrative containing the same motif (see N, 75.7–18; 75.20–76.5).
- 25 e.g. The biography of Rūzbihān Baqlī (d.606/1209) is found juxtaposed next to that of Abū Ishāq Kāzarūnī (d.426/1035), despite the fact that they lived centuries apart, apparently because they were both from Fārs (see N, 260.5–263.17).
- 26 This may be interpreted as a sign that the compilation was a collaborative effort under the supervision of the author.
- 27 N, 63.8–65.22 cf. TABS, 80–92; 131–135.
- 28 See pp.94–5 above.
- 29 e.g. Only that biography of Surayj which contains biographical material about him is retained. The other 'false' biography of Surayj, which actually contains biographical material about Junayd and is found shortly after the latter's biography, is omitted. However, some of the contents of the omitted biography are included in the biography of Junayd for which they are more appropriate (see p.157 below). See also the biographies of Sharīf Ḥamza-yi 'Aqlī (TABA, 132; 525 cf. N, 284). However, a new repetition of a biography has been made in the compilation of the *Nafahāt* (N, 61 cf. N, 91 – two biographies for Aḥmad b. 'Āsim Abū 'Abdullāh al-Anṭākī, headed using his 'ism and kunya respectively.

- 30 See N, 25–13, and pp.167–8 below.
- 31 N, 54.22–55.25 cf. TABA, 88.13–92.9.
- 32 For an explanation of the term 'bundle' in this context, see p.75 above.
- 33 For example, a segment about Abū Mūsā 'l-Dabīlī was included in the earlier biography, simply on account of its association with the preceding segment about Abū Yazīd which names Dabīlī as its source. However, not all the segments of addenda have been omitted (see TABA, 90.10, 91.1–2).
- 34 See N, 55.7–10; 22–25.
- 35 See pp.79–85 above.
- 36 N, 80.20 cf. TABA, 168.2–3; N, 80.21 cf. TABA, 168.14–169.1; N, 80.24 cf. TABA, 169.2; N, 81.3–4 cf. TABA, 169.3–5.
- 37 N, 81.5–22 cf. TABA, 182.3–183.12.
- 38 N, 81.23–24 cf. TABA, 185.12–186.3; N, 82.2–15 cf. TABA, 188.12–189.15.
- 39 TABA, 163.14–167.5.
- 40 See further p.163 below.
- 41 See p.191, n.13 above.
- 42 The display of miraculous knowledge about an outsider is a common motif in Sufi narratives, and indeed has been encountered already in the form of a narrative about Abū Yazīd in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* (see p.25 above).
- 43 N, 55.11–12 cf. TABA, 90.2–6.
- 44 TABS, 142.2–8; H, X, 281.22–282.4. See also pp.20–1; 58 above.
- 45 See p.139 above.
- 46 See p.138 above.
- 47 Element N8 belongs to a stock of segments that serve to illustrate the superiority of a religious authority over a political authority. See further TABA, 163.9–11.
- 48 See TABA, 161.8–162.12.
- 49 See p.108–9 above.
- 50 See Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt*, II, 231.1; 5–6.
- 51 See TABA, 163.3–8.
- 52 As opposed to 'illustrative' details (see Fahndrich, 'The *Wafayāt al-a'yān*', 438).
- 53 See TABA, 87.10–88.8.
- 54 See N, 1.7–16. His description of Sulamī's *Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* is based on that work's own introduction.
- 55 See Chapter Three above.
- 56 e.g. See above concerning the biographies found in Sulamī's *Tabaqāt* and also in Jāmī's *Nafahāt* despite having been omitted by Anṣārī.
- 57 See below and N, 2.5–14.
- 58 See further J.A. Mojaddedi, 'Jāmī's re-contextualisation of biographical traditions'.
- 59 See N, 385.1–4; 5–6.
- 60 For instance, the biographies of Qutham Shaykh and Khalīl Ātā (N, 388.3–389.23), which intervene between those of Sayyid Amīr Kulāl and Bahā'al-Dīn Naqshband are both made up almost entirely of material attributed to Naqshband (see Fig.2).
- 61 Although 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār is said to have been put in charge of many of Naqshband's students, within the latter's lifetime (N, 394.7–12), it is Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā who is identified as Naqshband's successor. Muḥammad

- Pārsā's biography is followed by that of his son and successor Khwāja Naṣr Pārsā (N, 401.2), which precedes the biography of 'Alā' al-Dīn's son and successor, Khwāja Hasan 'Aṭṭār (N, 401.15). The next three members, Ya'qūb Charkhī, Nizām al-Dīn Khāmūsh and 'Abdullāh Imāmī Isfahānī, are all described as associates of 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār. Sa'd al-Dīn Kāshgharī, who is traditionally remembered as Jāmī's own teacher, fits into the framework by virtue of his association with Nizām al-Dīn Khāmūsh (see Fig.2).
- 62 See N, 406.13–24; 403.7–21.
- 63 N, 416.19–417.8.
- 64 See N, 415.18–416.18; 410.7–11.
- 65 e.g. See N, 439–441. The bulk of the material in the two biographies which precede that of 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī is attributed to the latter.
- 66 N, 455.8–14.
- 67 N, 461.9–466.1.
- 68 N, 460.17–461.8.
- 69 N, 466.1–469.13.
- 70 N, 469.14–471.8.
- 71 N, 471.10–14.
- 72 See N, 419–420. The five biographies which follow after that of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī similarly continue to present material about him (N, 510–524).
- 73 The most prominent exception is the biography of Afdāl al-Dīn al-Khāqānī which appears after that of Shaykh Awḥadī Isfahānī (d.738/1337). It is stated that al-Khāqānī lived during the caliphate of al-Mustaḍī (d. 595/1198) [N, 506.13–14; N, 603.21–22].
- 74 Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī and Amīr Ḥusaynī are both described as disciples of Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīya' (see N, 599.11–602.21; 602.22–603.20); Khusraw and Hasan Dihlawī are similarly both students of Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' (N, 607.11–608.11).
- 75 N, 593.13.
- 76 N, 611.20.
- 77 N, 612.6–7.
- 78 N, 612.4–5.
- 79 N, 380.20–21.
- 80 N, 420.16–19.
- 81 N, 375.6–7.
- 82 See further Calder, *Studies*, 236–41.
- 83 Hujwīrī has already been observed to grant Abū Yazīd a pre-eminent status (see pp.136–7 above).
- 84 For instance see N, 328–334, which represents the origins of the Chishtī tradition. The six biographies which make up this section display a striking uniformity in form and content, which suggests that they have been imported from the same work. See further J.A. Mojaddedi, 'Jāmī's re-contextualisation'.

Conclusion

- 1 Ricoeur, 'The narrative function', 293.
- 2 Wansbrough, *Sectarian milieu*, 130. See also Cook, *Dogma*, Ch.11.

3 Ruppia, 'Quranic Studies', 44.

4 For a contemporary example, see Nurbakhsh, *Mardān-i Sūfī*.

5 Kearney (Ed.), *Dialogues*, 28.

Appendix

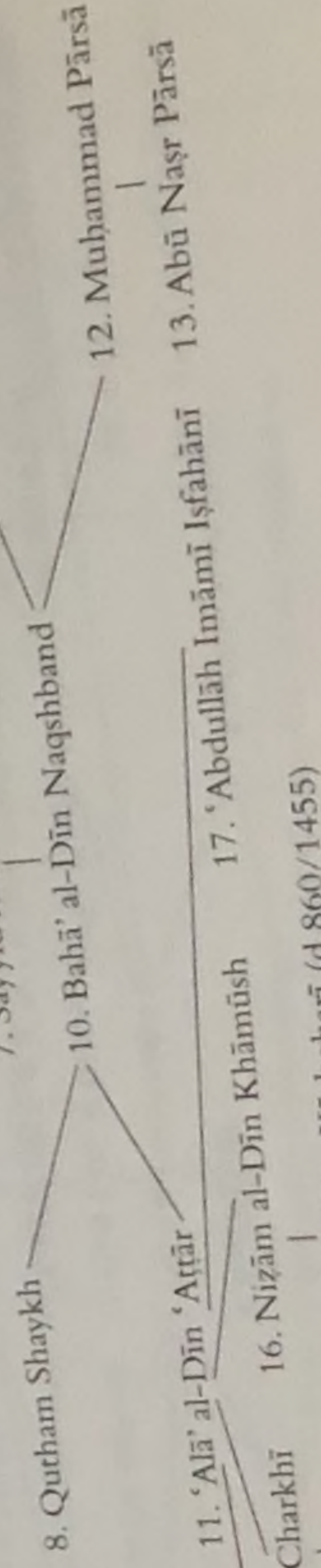
The biographies represented in these charts are numbered according to their order of appearance in the text concerned. The associations between biographies, indicated in Figs. 2 to 5, are not necessarily historical associations between their subjects (see further Ch.6 above).

1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation	4th Generation	5th Generation
1. al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād	1. al-Junayd	1. al-Jurayrī	1. al-Shiblī	1. Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī
2. Ibrāhīm b. Adham	2. al-Nūrī	2. Abū 'l-'Abbās b. 'Atā'	2. al-Murta'ish	2. Abū 'Amr al-Zajjājī
3. Dhū 'l-Nūn	3. al-Ḥirī	3. Maḥfūz b. Maḥmūd	3. Abū 'Alī 'l-Rūdhbārī	3. Ja'far al-Khuldī
4. Bishr b. al-Ḥārith	4. al-Jallā'	4. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī	4. al-Thaqafī	4. al-Sayyārī
5. al-Saqāfī	5. Ruwaym b. Aḥmad	5. Abū 'Umar al-Dimashqī	5. Ibn Munāzil	5. al-Duqqī
6. al-Muḥāsibī	6. Yūsuf al-Rāzī	6. Ibn Ḥamīd al-Tirmidhī	6. al-Aqṭa'	6. 'Abdullāh al-Rāzī
7. Shaqīq al-Balkhī	7. Shāh al-Kirmānī	7. Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ	7. al-Kattānī	7. Ibn Nujayd al-Sulamī
8. al-Bastāmī	8. Samnūn b. Ḥamza	8. 'Abdullāh al-Kharāz	8. al-Nahrajūrī	8. al-Būshanjī
9. al-Dārānī	9. 'Amr al-Makkī	9. Bunān al-Hammāl	9. al-Muzayyin	9. Ibn Khafīf
10. Ma'rūf al-Karkhī	10. al-Tustarī	10. Abū Ḥamza al-Baghdādī	10. Ibn al-Kātib	10. Bundār b. al-Ḥusayn
11. Ḥātim al-Aṣamm	11. Muḥammad al-Balkhī	11. Abū 'l-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq	11. Ibn Bunān	11. al-Ṭamastānī al-Fārisī
12. al-Ḥawārī	12. Ibn 'Alī 'l-Tirmidhī	12. Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī	12. al-Abharī	12. al-Dīnawarī
13. Ibn Khadrawayhi	13. al-Warrāq	13. al-Ḥallāj	13. al-Qirmīsīnī	13. Abū 'Uthmān al-Maghribī
14. Yabyā b. Mu'adh	14. Abū Sa'īd al-Kharāz	14. Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Dīnawarī	14. Ibn Hind al-Fārisī	14. al-Naṣrābādī
15. Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nisābūrī	15. 'Alī b. Sahl al-Iṣbahānī	15. Mumshādh al-Dīnawarī	15. al-Qirmīsīnī	15. al-Ḥusrī
16. Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣār	16. Abū 'l-'Abbās b. Masrūq	16. Ibrāhīm al-Qaṣār al-Raqqī	16. Ibn Yazdāniyār	16. al-Turūghbadhī
17. Maṣūr b. 'Ammār	17. Abū 'Abdullāh al-Maghribī	17. Khayr al-Nassāj	17. al-Muwallad	17. Abū 'Abdullāh al-Rūdhbārī
18. Aḥmad al-Anṭākī	18. al-Juzjānī	18. Abū Ḥamza l-Khurasānī	18. Ibn Sālim	18. al-Ṣayrafi
19. 'Abdullāh al-Anṭākī	19a. Muḥammad b. Abī 'l-Ward	19. al-Ṣubayḥī	19. al-Nasawī	19. al-Shibhī
20. al-Nakhshabī	19b. Aḥmad b. Abī 'l-Ward	20. Ibn Hamdān	20. Ibn Abī Sa'dān	20. al-Farrā
	20. Abū 'Abdullāh al-Sijzī			21a. Muḥammad al-Muqrī
				21b. Ja'far al-Muqrī
				22. al-Rāshidī
				23. Abū 'Abdullāh al-Dīnawarī

Appendix 1 The framework of Sulami's *Tabaqat al-Shayyā*

Abū 'Alī Fārmadī (See Fig. 5)

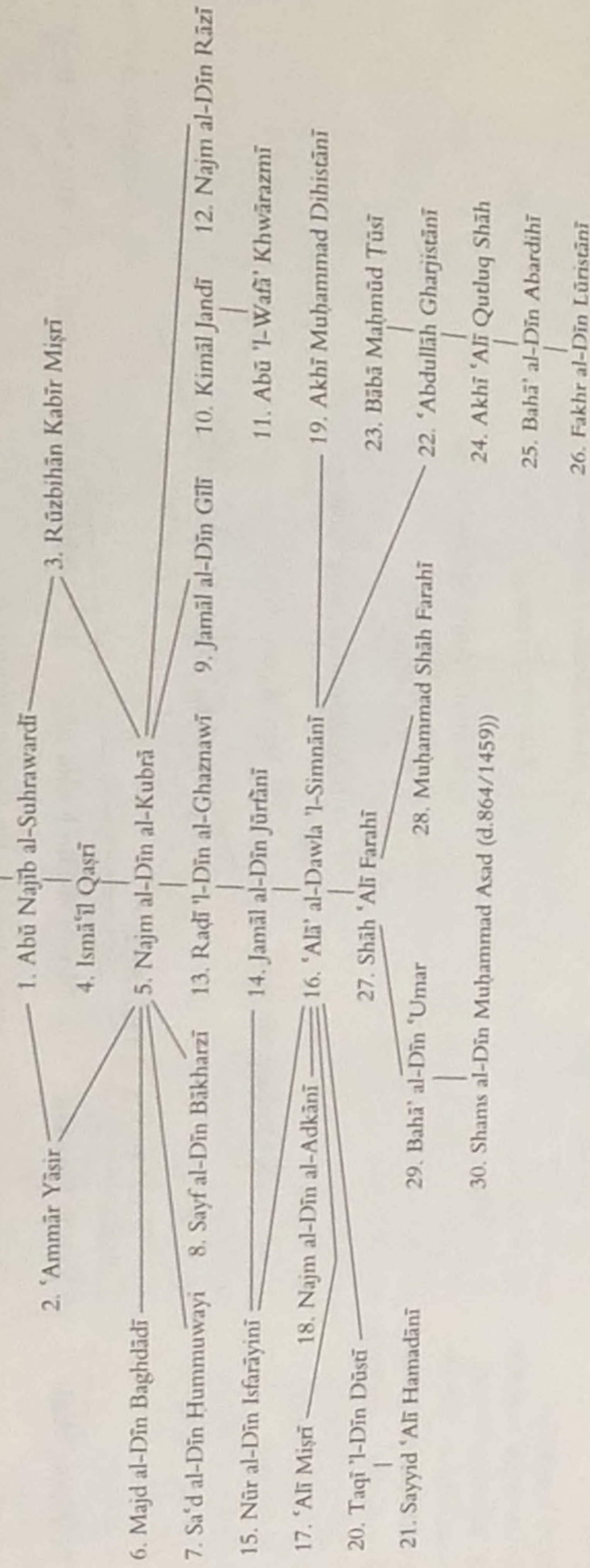
1. Yūsuf Hamadānī
2. 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghujdawānī
3. 'Ārif Rūwḡirawī
4. Maḥmūd Anjūr Faghnavī
5. 'Alī Rāmīṭānī
6. Muḥammad Bābā Samāsiyī
7. Sayyid Amīr Kulāl



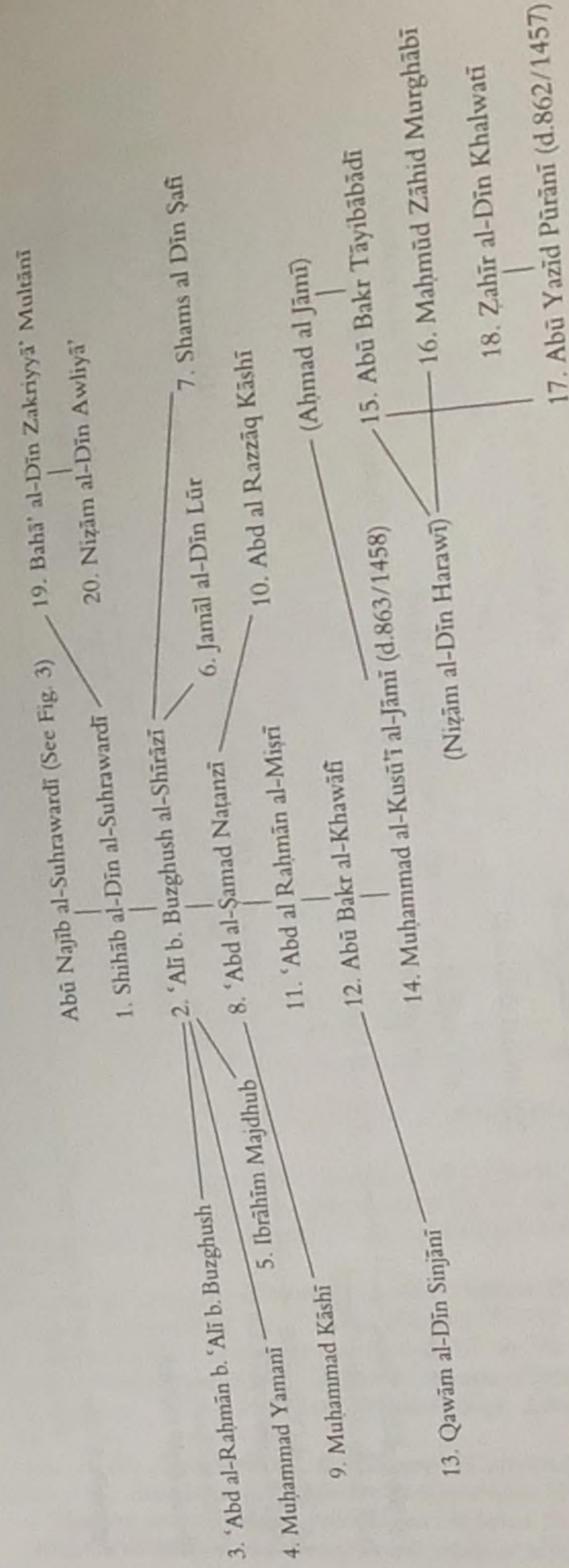
19. 'Ubaydullāh Ahrār (d. 896/1490)

Appendix 2 The Naqshbandi cluster of biographies (Cluster 3.1) in the *Nafahāt al-uns*

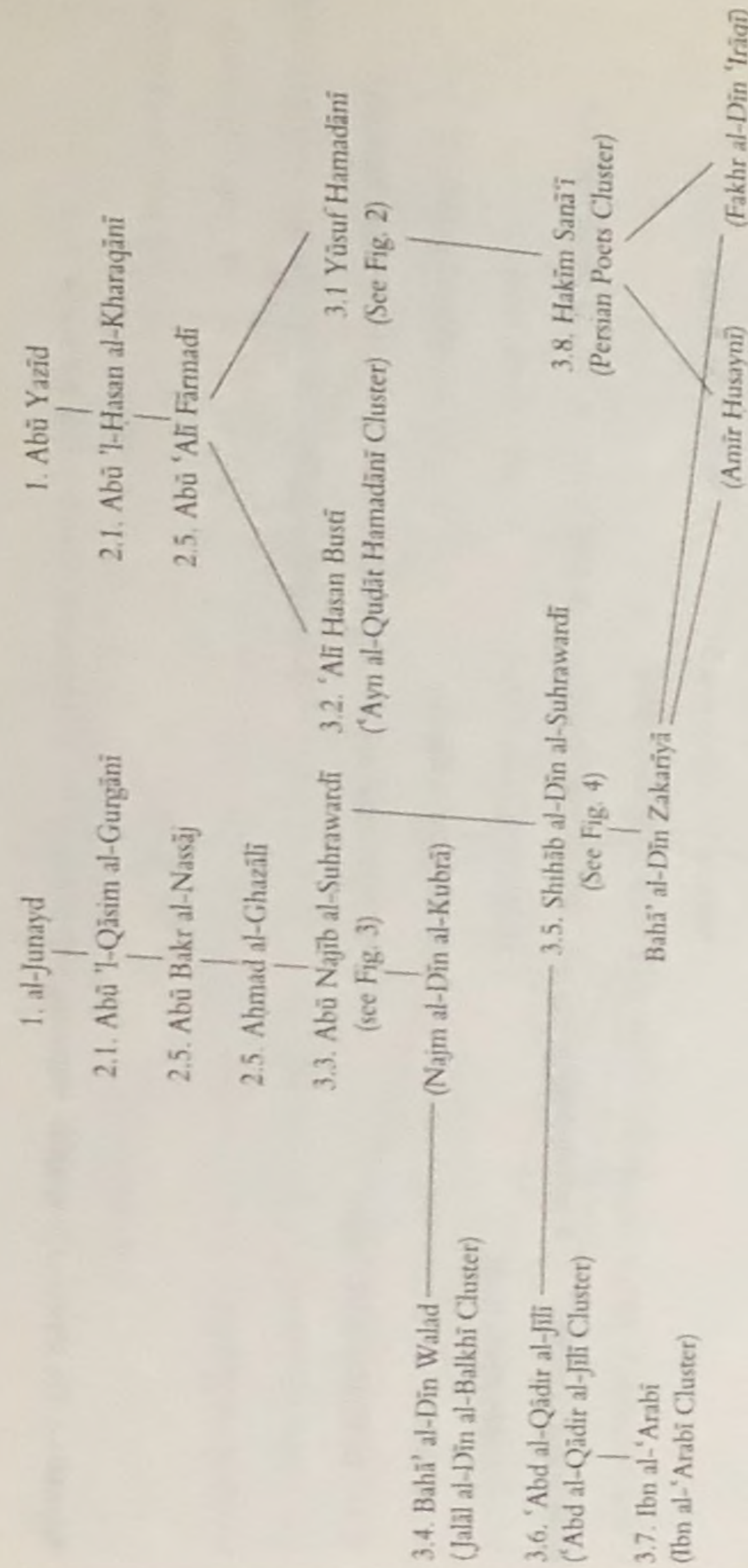
Appendix 3 The cluster of biographies beginning with Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī (Cluster 3.3) in the *Nafahāt al-uns*



Appendix 4 The cluster of biographies beginning with Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (Cluster 3.5) in the *Nafahāt al-uns*



Appendix 4 The cluster of biographies beginning with Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (Cluster 3.5) in the *Nafahāt al-uns*



Appendix 5 Associations between the clusters in Section 3 (*muta'akhkhirūn*) of the *Nafahāt al-uns*, including their links back to Section 1 (*muta'addimūn*)

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The Biographical Tradition in Sufism

Jawid A. Mojaddedi

This book is the first in-depth study of the major works of Sufi historiography belonging to the *tabaqat* genre, one of the most productive genres of the Islamic literary tradition. It highlights the characteristics and conventions of the genre at each level of structure, and also demonstrates their functions and the concept of history which they express. Mojaddedi grounds his argument in the analysis of representative passages from Arabic and Persian sources, nearly all of which are translated here for the first time.

The six closely-related texts under examination include works which display a high degree of authorial control as well as those which appear to have reached their final form only after an extended period of growth beyond the death of the assumed author. The growth of individual biographical traditions is monitored through successive works of the genre, focusing on the biographies of Abu Yazid al-Bastami and Abu 'l-Qasim al-Junayd. The book also takes into consideration the popular Sufi manuals which contain substantial *tabaqat* sections.

On the basis of the texts considered, Mojaddedi proposes a reconsideration of the historical value of this genre, from the direct sources of 'facts' about the past which they describe, to sources for the contexts in which they themselves were produced by the considerable efforts of their authors and compilers.